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THE EVOLUTION OF IMMORTALITY

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THE EVOLUTION
OF
IMMORTALITY

BY

S. D. McCONNELL, D.D., D.C.L.
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TO
My Good Friend
WILLIAM A. READ
IN RECOGNITION OF MANY KINDNESSES
AND IN MEMORY OF A SUMMER SUNDAY'S WALK
AND TALK IN THE WOODS OF MAINE

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THE EVOLUTION OF IMMORTALITY

“For man is, according to nature, mortal, as a being who has been made out of things that are perishable. But on account of his likeness to God he can by piety ward off and escape from his natural mortality and remain indestructible if he retain the knowledge of God, or can lose his incorruptibility if he lose his life in God.”

—ATHANASIUS.



THE EVOLUTION OF IMMORTALITY

CHAPTER I

THE sphinx, with the teeming breasts of a woman and the cruel claws of a tiger, is the eternal parable of Nature. She is equally equipped to produce and nourish or to rend and kill. Men of all ages have tried to gather from her stony gaze which she means to do. Not a few will turn away with impatience from another attempt to read the eternal riddle. "If a man die shall he live again?" is the burden of the old drama of Uz. An endless human interest attaches to the question, so strong that however often it be abandoned it must needs be once again renewed. It beckons while it eludes. There is no reason to believe that men will ever be content to sit down before it or to definitely abandon it as insoluble. Once and again an answer has been found. Plato reasoned that each soul is essentially immortal, being a divine "idea," bound up in the very being of God,

and therefore not dependent for its existence upon any passing association which it may have with matter. This conception has been sufficient for multitudes of men through twenty-four centuries of time. Pythagoras maintained that a man's soul comes to him from the body of some other man or inferior animal which it has just left, and that upon leaving him it transmigrates to another still, wandering through eternity as the transient guest of unnumbered successive bodies. This belief, modified in various ways, has been in the past, and is to-day probably, entertained by the majority of all who have a thought upon the matter at all. The Christian world has for a long time believed that the soul and the body are immediate and simultaneous creations of God, that they live in an intimate partnership during a lifetime, then separate, only to be reunited ultimately in a permanent personality which neither heaven nor hell will ever separate. Amidst all these, other multitudes have contented themselves, or felicitated themselves, as the case may be, with the conviction that as the beast dies so dies a man. To-day none of these beliefs can be sincerely entertained by any reasonable man. The best purpose which any of them can serve for one is in carrying

out Socrates's advice, "for he should persevere until he has attained one of two things; either he should discover or learn the truth, or if this be impossible, I would have him take the best and most irrefragable of human notions, and let this be the raft upon which he sails through life, — not without risk, as I admit, if he cannot find some word of God which will move and safely carry him."

The belief current within Christendom upon the question of the future life remained substantially unchanged during the thirteen centuries between Augustine and Darwin. It will not be very difficult to see where, when, and how that belief came into Christianity. Later on I will try to do this. Nor is it difficult to see that that belief is rapidly, if silently, disappearing from among thoughtful men. Nor, once again, will it be difficult to show at least some of the chiefest among the influences against which it cannot persist. This also I will try to do. This having been done, the ground will be cleared upon which to build a faith out of the material which human consciousness, human science, and Holy Scripture can furnish. If it then shall appear that the doctrine is not new, but venerable, it may be all the more readily welcomed.

The Creed says, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." In its earlier and more naïve form it says "the resurrection of the flesh." This phrase is capable of a wider and more reasonable interpretation than the words would seem to imply. Such a meaning is very generally read into it. But when the phrase was formulated, it was intended to mean precisely what it says. This is the meaning which it still has for the multitude. It means that at the moment of death the soul and body separate; that the body slowly decays and is disintegrated; that the soul goes temporarily to a place of its own where it endures in a state of partial self-consciousness for a long but indefinite period; that at the end of that period every body which has ever lived will be reconstituted, of the same matter, with member, joint, and limb restored; that each soul will be reunited to its own body; that then comes judgment, reward, and doom.

To merely state this series of notions is sufficient to show their essential impossibility. When they were first formulated their difficulties did indeed appear, but were evaded by arguments which then sufficed, but which no one now will credit with any validity. Irenæus, for example ("Cont. Heres."

v. 2), recognizes the natural impossibility of recovering the atoms of the body from decay, but argues that the body, having been once nourished with the Eucharistic body and blood of Christ, is transformed in quality, and so kept distinguished through all the ages from the matter with which its dust is mingled. Tertullian ("De Resurrec. Car." vi. 4) faces the obvious difficulty: "Shall the same flesh which has fallen into decay be so expected to recover as that the lame, and the one-eyed, and the blind, and the leper, and the palsied shall come back again, although there can be no pleasure in returning to the old condition? What must we say of the consequences of resuming the flesh? Will it again be subject to its present wants as of meats and drinks? (Shall it come) from the devouring fires, and the waters of the sea, and the maws of beasts, and the crops of birds, and the stomachs of fishes? Shall we, having lungs, float? Or suffer pains in the bowels, or having organs of shame feel no shame? Or will the recovery of the flesh only revive again the desire to escape from it?" In reply he contends that the human body, although formed from earth, has in virtue of having become human flesh ceased to be earth and been transformed into a different substance,

essentially incorruptible, just as gold, although formed from earth has taken on the quality of gold, and gold will remain even though ground to dust and mixed with earth. Origen escapes the difficulty in large part by recurring to St. Paul's dictum that the body which perishes is but the seed from which a new body will spring, asserting that in the old body is some portion, or organ, or piece which will develop as the seed of a plant does when its integuments are decayed. This notion of the function of the pineal gland, "the bone Luz," or the *os sacrum*, appears again and again. Hardly anything more than an antiquarian interest, however, attaches to the discussions of Fathers or schoolmen. They were so completely ignorant of the laws and facts of physical nature out of which the difficulties in the way of a bodily resurrection arise, that their arguments and speculations are only as the serious disputations of children. They had no true conception of the laws and qualities of matter, they knew nothing of that complex arrangement by which matter becomes the basis of life. In a word, the popular notions concerning the resurrection of the body are simply a survival in the midst of a world which knows of conceptions which were formulated by a world which did

not know. But knowledge is a fact to be taken account of. The common man of to-day cannot say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," unless he either use it as a sacrosanct form of words conveying no intelligible meaning, or else as meaning something different from what the words connote. He may legitimately and honestly use it in either of these ways. Most men do so. But it is surely desirable that he should try to see what, precisely, is the truth which he is attempting to put into words, and why he believes it to be a truth. The knowledge which the world now has concerning the constitution of matter, the science of chemistry and biology and psychology, have rendered it quite impossible to believe in any future life which should depend upon any form of reintegration of the natural body which has once returned to dust. Dust it is, and to dust it doth return, and the return is final so far as concerns the personality once bound up with it. If a material basis for another life be demanded, as it must be, the requisite body must be sought elsewhere and by other means. No doubt the current speech of man about it all will long remain unchanged. In the region of religion phrases which are at first used as attempts to state truth scientifically become

sanctified by use and hallowed by association. Little by little they lose the sharpness of connotation which they at first possess, and become symbols which stand for complex emotions which are awakened by their sound, or for truths which are eternal, but for which no final or adequate phrase can ever be found. "Resurgam" will still be chiselled upon tombs, the "hope of a joyful resurrection" will still cheer and solace the simple man's dying, the bodies of the dead will be laid in the earth reverently so long as it remains true that the thought of the personality who has left our sight is bound up with that of the muddy vesture of decay which it wore while known and loved. And all this in spite of the categorical assertion of the apostle that this "is *not* that body which shall be, but some other."

“So with respect to immortality. As physical science states this problem, it seems to stand thus: Is there any means of knowing whether the series of states of consciousness, which has been casually associated for threescore years and ten with the arrangement and movements of innumerable millions of material molecules, can be continued in like association with some substance which has not the properties of matter and force? As Kant said, on a like occasion, if anybody can answer that question he is just the man I want to see. If he says that consciousness cannot exist, except in relation of cause and effect with certain organic molecules, I must ask how he knows that; and if he says it can, I must ask the same question.”

—PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

CHAPTER II

SINCE men have known anything, they have known that there is some connection between the mind and the body. The first savage who was knocked senseless by the blow of another savage's club must have learned by that rude experiment that a broken head interrupted or confused his thought. One of the most amazing things, however, in the history of the race is the way in which the significance of this general fact failed to be recognized. There was here one of those vicious circles within which human thought remains for ages confined. For ages it was assumed that mind and body were two separate and independent things, living together, but each with a life of its own. The falsity of this could not be seen until the true relation between them should be discovered; and the true relation could not be seen until the erroneous assumption was abandoned. So the matter remained from time immemorial until the present century. The soul was believed to inhabit the body as a tenant dwells

in a house held upon an uncertain lease. That the two should interact upon each other was no more thought than that a house could affect the character of its tenant. The sum of knowledge was that when the house fell into decay or was broken by a catastrophe, the tenant moved away. Aberrations or confusions of the mind were accounted for by the operations of other spirits. Possession, obsession, demoniacal or spiritual influences, accounted for insanity, and the free and independent existence of the mind accounted for sanity. It is true that certain emotions were believed to have their seat in certain organs, as hatred in the liver, by the Greeks, and love in the intestines, as by the Hebrews; but as for any interplay and mutual dependency between the soul and the body, the idea never occurred, or if it did it remained unfruitful. It is hardly more than a century since the nexus of mind and body began to be studied. When Hartley announced his theory that mental action was dependent upon definite functions of the brain, he met with almost universal incredulity. When Cabanis, half a century later, delivered his brutal dictum that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile," he shocked society, not because he said a thing grossly, but because he said it at all. The

paper read by Gall before the French Academy in 1808 may be called the beginning of the science whose classics Dr. Wundt and Professor Ladd call "Physiological Psychology." Now, it has become part of everyday knowledge that mind and body are so essentially interrelated that the diverse faculties of the mind are bound up with certain specific portions of the brain and nervous system. This is not only true of the inferior functions, such as sense perceptions and physical memory, but of the supreme faculties as well. Says Professor Haeckel, "Paul Flechsig of Leipsic has proved that in the gray bed of the brain are found the three seats of the central sense-organs,—touch in the vertical lobe, smell in the frontal lobe, and sight in the occipital lobe. Between these three sense-centres lie the three great thought-centres or centres of association, *the real organs of mental life*. They are those highest instruments of psychic activity which produce thought and consciousness." Whatever may be said of the over-fanciful refinement of the anatomist in trying to locate too minutely the nervous areas which are connected with definite psychic activities, the general fact is accepted. We do not now send our insane to be exorcised. We do not hold a sick man morally responsible

for his mental or moral vagaries. The whole world allows that physical lesion produces a state of mind. But the implications of this admission are incalculable. Dr. Keene reports this case to me. A lad of fifteen is brought to him suffering from epilepsy. He is a partial imbecile, slaving, violent, obscene, untruthful, thievish, a foul travesty of humanity,—a youthful Caliban. Certain physical symptoms point to a pressure upon a certain spot of his brain. An unnoticed and forgotten scar confirms the diagnosis. The skull is trephined, the pressure is removed, and the epilepsy is cured. But that is the least part of it. His obscenity, deceit, and dishonesty are also cured. Not seven devils have been cast out of his spirit, but a little point of bone had been lifted out of his brain. The result is the same. But the barest recognition of this fact renders necessary a new definition of soul. Nor has the matter stopped with a bare admission that the body and soul are more closely related than had been supposed. Ten thousand actual experiments have built up the firm belief that every psychic activity, every sensation, every emotion, every thought, every act of will or of affection, is correlated with some definite action of the molecules of some specific portion of the

nervous system. The "soul" has seemingly been convicted of false pretences. Instead of being an independent entity, living in the body and dominating it, it appears to be but a convenient word to designate the complex sum total of the final and highest output of the organized body. As Haeckel puts it, "all the phenomena of the psychic life are without exception bound up with certain material changes in the living substance of the body, the *protoplasm*. We do not attribute any peculiar 'essence' to its soul. We consider the *psyche* to be merely a collective idea of all the psychic functions of protoplasm."

This is the last word of science upon the soul. Nor can we dismiss or disregard it as being merely the *ipse dixit* of an extreme scientific dogmatist. No doubt Professor Haeckel can be fairly so called. But then all biologists, all chemists, all physicists, agree with him up to this point. Whatever we may find the soul to be over and above, this fact we must reckon with, that it is as dependent upon matter for its being as matter is dependent upon it for its organization. And this interdependence of mind and matter exists through every step in the range of living things. In the lowest forms of living creatures

the whole protoplasmic cellular mass is all body and all mind. Without organs or differentiated faculties any portion of it responds to any stimulus which may touch it. In the next higher stage the mind begins to be localized. Rudimentary sense-organs begin to appear, little protoplasmic filaments and pigment spots become the forerunners of the organs of perception. In another stage the nervous system becomes sufficiently organized to show phenomena which cannot be distinguished from intelligence. Finally, the highest of all psychic action shows itself by converging all sensations upon a certain specific spot of the nervous substance of the brain, and being reflected back in self-consciousness. There is no break or gap or interruption in the long series of evolution. From the beginning to the end physical progress and psychical progress are bound up together. They do not seem to move always in parallel lines or with an equal pace, but to be interrelated parts of one living, moving, creeping, climbing life. Organized matter seems to be sensitive not only to physical force and chemical affinity, but to psychic attraction and reaction, and these are not two distinguishable and independent modes of action, but in each kind of action the whole of the

being seems to be concerned. Mind, or at least something so much like mind that their phenomena cannot be distinguished, seems to belong to all organized matter down to its very lowest term. Indeed, the highest intellectual faculties seem to be but aggregations and correlations of innumerable primary sensations, and to be dependent upon the action of remote centres, so that "memory" and "volition" may be fairly said to be faculties of each and every microscopic body-cell. The final analysis would seem to be that every particular cell of living matter has its psychic function. The ancient chasm between animal and vegetable life has been long since filled up. The microscope furnished the tool. The study of cellular life provided the material. Now it has been established that the animal and the vegetable are but two bifurcated branches of a tree whose stem and roots are in common. Nor does inexorable science stop there. The genealogy of the protoplasmic cell itself has been traced. Every multi-cellular organism begins its life as a stem-cell, an impregnated ovum. Even at the beginning the cell has a psychic life of its own. But behind this lie still simpler cell forms. In these we seem to touch the point where the dead and the living meet together. Max Ver-



worn, after his long study of the "Protists" among the Metazoa, pronounces that in them the psychic life and the molecular movement coalesce. In them he finds "a bridge which connects the chemical processes of the inorganic world with the psychic life of the highest animals."

Is it possible, therefore, that that mysterious and inscrutable thing which we call "life" is being all the while slowly secreted, as it were, from inorganic matter in the secret places of the earth? May it be true that the old generalization, *ex ovum ovo*, will have to be qualified? May Spontaneous Generation be a fact, after all? It is true that until very lately the scientific world has given an unanimous negative. Twenty-five years ago Professor Huxley declared that "the present state of science furnishes us with no link between the living and the not living." Professor Tyndall had then demonstrated the faultiness of the experiments upon which Dr. Bastian based his assertion that he had evoked life from inorganic matter. But since that time the chemist and the biologist have done many marvellous things. They have not been able to transform any single atom of dead matter into living, nor is it likely they ever will. But it is a hasty conclusion that

because they cannot do it, it is never done. One may well hesitate to believe that the sum total of life has remained unchanged since the creation of the world. God's laboratory of nature is constructed upon an enormously complex scale. Because the chemist with his vials and retorts cannot produce life from lifeless matter establishes no presumption that it is not being done continually in ocean's depth or in that boundless region of the infinitely little beyond the ken of the microscope. Above all, it is perilous to build a philosophy or a religious faith upon a foundation which would be destroyed if the *generatio equivoca* should turn out to be a fact. All that Tyndall and Pasteur have said is that no one as yet has produced life except through the agency of antecedent life.

"There, for the moment, the matter rests. But the end is not yet. Fauna and flora are here, and thanks to Lemarek and Wallace and Darwin, their development through those secondary causes which we call nature has been proximately explained. The lowest forms of life have been linked with the highest in unbroken chains of descent. Meantime, through the efforts of chemists and biologists, the gap between the inorganic and the organic worlds,

which once seemed to be infinite, has been constantly narrowed. Already philosophy can throw a bridge across the gap. But experimental science, which builds its own bridges, has not yet spanned the chasm, small though it appear. Until it shall have done so, the bridge of organic evolution is not quite complete."

No student of physical science would be surprised to learn any day that the last gap had been filled.

“Man is not merely a mortal, but a moral being. If he sinks below this plane of life he misses the path marked out for him by all his past development. In order to progress, the higher vertebrate had to subordinate everything to mental development. In order to become human it had to develop the rational intelligence. In order to become higher man, present man must subordinate everything to moral development. This is the great law of animal and human development clearly revealed in the sequence of physical and psychical functions.”

—PROF. JOHN M. TAYLOR.

CHAPTER III

Now the whole line of thought briefly sketched above is absolutely new. Not only were Sts. Paul and Augustine and Thomas utterly unaware of the facts upon which it is based, but so were Calvin and Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Chalmers. No doctrine of the resurrection of the dead or of the life of the world to come, formulated even fifty years ago, can be satisfactory to the man of to-day. The actual amount of knowledge accumulated during those years concerning the nature and laws of life and death, of generation and decay, of force and energy, and their transformation, is greater by an immeasurable increment than the sum of all which preceded. To refuse to take account of it would not only be futile, but would write us down as less intelligent than the Fathers, who availed themselves of all the science they possessed to elucidate and fortify their doctrine.

But no one ought to overlook or seek to

evade the fact that the new biology and physics have overclouded the common hope of life in the world to come. The simple dualism upon which that has heretofore been based is no longer believable by multitudes. The phenomenon of a human personality can no longer be accounted for by the assumption of a temporary union of an immortal soul with a perishable body. The nexus has been seen to be not arbitrary or artificial or mechanical, but organic. This conviction, which cannot be resisted, has over-weighted and sunk in many their belief in the life everlasting. To not a few this has been a burden more heavy than would be a judge's doom to death. They see that what they call the soul and what they call the body are so identified in their whole career, from the germ-cell to the grave, that they cannot any longer think of the psychic personality surviving the break-up of the physical organism. When they attempt to do so, they find the same intellectual helplessness that they would if bidden to think of shadow without substance or extension without form. For them not only has the hope of immortality faded, but the very existence of such a present fact as a soul has become difficult to believe. So correlated are psy-

chic and physical energy that the soul of man threatens to disappear as an objective entity.

At this point a serious attempt has been made to find relief by drawing a line through psychic phenomena and labelling those nearest the physical basis "Instinct," and those higher up "Reason." This latter, it is contended, together with the "Conscience" or ethical faculty constitute the soul proper and are peculiar to man. Grant, it is said, all that biology claims concerning the mental life of animals, still, man is marked off by the possession of psychic qualities so different in kind from those of the lower creatures that he stands unique in the possession of a soul. This has proven, however, to be only a frail dike set against the incoming of the tide. In fact it has completely broken down before the weight of actual experiment and observation. So long as psychologists confined their researches to the human mind this position remained tenable. In 1760, Reimarus published his "General Observations of the Instincts of Animals." In it he called in question the validity of the distinction between "instinct" and "reason." The time, however, was not ripe, and his discoveries attracted little

attention. But during the last forty years Darwin and Romanes and Sir John Lubbock, Wundt and Büchner and Karl Gross, and Ladd and Moulton and James and their collaborators in America, have conducted experiments so abundant and so careful that the former classification of psychic action into reason and instinct has been definitely abandoned. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that psychic actions may be thus distinguished, but that reason is not confined to man nor instinct to beasts. For example, among Indians and other savages the sense of direction is, so far as one can see, just as much an instinct as it is in the homing pigeon. The faculty, moreover, appears to be of the same kind, and not differing greatly in degree. The wild man will turn his face unerringly toward his lodge, and with only a subordinate regard to the sun and the lay of the land will keep his course through forest and swamp, over mountain and desert, until he reaches his goal. Nor is this the only "instinct" of man. The new-born babe knows how to suck. The young mother knows how to hold the babe to her breast. Sex desires know the path to their gratification. The eye knows how to close itself against injury — and such like.

But the important fact for our purpose is that those higher faculties of the soul such as reason, choice, number, shame, and duty show themselves in creatures far below man in the graduated scale of being. We need not stop to note the strange wisdom of the ant and the bee, whose liliputian commonwealths in many ways might be models for human cities. The "reason" which they display shows such striking limitations and peculiarities that it may be set aside, if one choose, as purely reflex or automatic. A characteristic of reason is to discern an object desired, and to use rational and suitable means to attain it. A very few instances, chosen almost at random from the mass of experiment and observation recorded, will suffice. I begin with an experiment made by myself. During a hunting trip I was in camp with a friend in the wilderness of the far Northwest. A mile above our camp was a beavers' dam. We visited or passed it almost every day, and every day saw the marks of the beavers' nocturnal woodcraft. One day, to see what the inhabitants of the aquatic village might do, we broke a chasm two feet wide in the dam which backed the water up about their submerged houses. Next day the gap was mended. In the night the beavers had gone ashore, cut

down a tree eight inches in diameter which stood more than a hundred feet away from the stream. The trunk of the tree was of no use for their purposes. They felled it to procure the small limbs which grew twenty feet from the ground. The chips showed that they had cut the limbs where they lay into pieces of the proper length to mend the hole in their dam thirty yards distant. Each stick was just sufficiently long to reach across the break and allow enough to lap over and hold at either end. These they had put in place, and interlaced with smaller twigs, tamped with earth and leaves, so that the dam was good as new. Now, note what they had done. First they surveyed the break, and saw how, and how alone, it could be mended. Then they sought the suitable material for the repairs. Then they cut down a tree for the purpose of securing the limbs which were in sight, but not within reach of animals who could not climb. Then they ascertained the length required for the pieces they wished. Then they cut them off *in situ*, and carried them to where they were needed. The ultimate purpose of it all was to save the doors of their houses from being exposed by the drawing off of the water. In what way then does this differ in *kind* from the reason of a

man who builds a house? The whole performance seemed to us so amazing and incredible that to eliminate the possibility of accident we repeated it three times upon that hapless village, and always with the same result.

Take another instance, quoted and verified by Romanes from Thompson. In his camp in the jungle of Tillicherry he had a monkey tied to a long upright bamboo pole by a chain running on a ring, which allowed the monkey to climb to the top, where was a seat upon which he spent most of his time. While he sat here, the thievish crows, which swarmed about, stole his food, which was placed every morning at the foot of his pole. To this he had vainly expressed his dislike by chattering and slipping down in vain effort to catch them. "One morning, however, he appeared to be seriously ill, he closed his eyes, dropped his head, and exhibited other evidences of severe suffering. No sooner were his ordinary rations placed at the foot of the bamboo than the crows, watching their opportunity, descended in great numbers, and according to their usual custom began to demolish his provisions. The monkey now began to descend the pole by slow degrees as though the effort overpowered him, and as if so overcome by indisposition that his

remaining strength was hardly equal to the exertion. When he reached the ground, he rolled about for some time, seeming in great agony, until he found himself close to the vessel where the crows had by this time well-nigh devoured his food. There he lay apparently in a state of complete insensibility. After a little a crow plucked up courage to approach and stretch its neck toward the food. But the watchful avenger seized it with the rapidity of thought and secured it from doing further mischief. He now began to chatter and grin with every expression of gratified triumph, while the crows flew around, cawing, as if deprecating the chastisement about to be inflicted upon the captive brother. The monkey continued for a while to chatter and grin in triumph; he then deliberately placed the crow between his knees, and began to pluck it with the most humorous gravity. When he had completely stripped it, except of the larger feathers in the wings and tail, he flung it into the air from where it fell to the ground with a stunning shock. He then ascended his pole, and the next time his food was brought, not a single crow approached it." Now, in what essential particular was the mental action of this monkey different from that of a farmer, with

some sense of humor, who sets a trap for the crows devouring his corn?

Once again, selecting from that treasure-house of facts gathered by Darwin. "A troop of baboons were observed crossing a valley in Abyssinia. Some had already ascended the opposite mountain, and some were still in the valley, when the latter were attacked by dogs, but the old males immediately hurried down from the rocks, with mouths open, roaring so fearfully that the dogs quickly drew back. They were again encouraged to the attack, but by this time all the baboons had reascended the heights excepting a young child of about six months, who, loudly calling for aid, climbed on a block of rock and was surrounded. Thereupon, one of the largest males came down again from the mountain, slowly went to the young one, coaxed him down, and carried him away, the dogs being too much astonished to make an attack." In what does the action of the baboon differ in kind from that supreme moral sense which moves its possessor to imperil his life for his brother?

Such facts as the above might be quoted to fill volumes from that mass of literature upon the subject which has been accumulated within a generation. One, however, is as good as a

thousand. The effect of them all has been to establish the truth of the generalization made by Darwin forty years ago. "The difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, is certainly one of degree and not of kind. The senses and instincts, the various emotions and faculties, of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed, condition in the lower animals." And Mr. Darwin lies, without protest, in Westminster Abbey.

No: the new science and the new philosophy for which his name may well stand as a symbol has been accepted, not only by the world of science, but by the religious world as well. We have reached the point where the old phrases "immortality of the soul" and "resurrection of the body" must take on new meanings if they are to be comprehended, and must deal with new difficulties if they are to be retained. If the truth which these phrases have heretofore expressed sufficiently well is to be kept alive among men, its roots must be traced to a reason immeasurably deeper down in the nature of things than is generally realized. If it be the fact, as it seems to be, that belief in a future life is being given up by intelligent men, we may be assured that it is not because

the "instinct of living" is any less strong in them than in their forefathers. It is not that they desire life less, or because they are more willing to be resolved into nothingness. It is because their hope has met defeat at the hands of other truth which has slowly shown itself. There are multitudes for whom neither the old phrases nor the old arguments will any longer suffice. To clear these away is an ungracious and distasteful task. They are so intertwined with religious sentiment and human affection that to disturb them seems to some little short of wanton outrage. They are formulated in creeds, enshrined in poetry, hymns, and liturgies. They are ingrained in the very fibre of religious faith and are powerful sanctions for conduct. Why disturb them? The only answer is, it is always best in the long run to know the truth. It is better that the simple Christian within the Church should have his beliefs disturbed than that his brother should be shut out of the Kingdom by those beliefs. It is not only better intrinsically, but it is also the mind of Christ, and was His way. The little ones whom He warned against offending were those who were kept out of the Kingdom by the inconsiderate action of those within. We need have no fear that belief in "the resurrection of

the dead, and the life of the world to come" will be abandoned, provided only it be conceived of in such a way as will permit it to be correlated with all else which we know to be true.

“Evolution may be conceived of as resulting in beings capable of proposing to themselves a certain aim, and of dragging nature after them toward it. Natural selection would thus finally be converted into a moral, and, in some sort, divine selection. It can, in effect, produce species and types superior to humanity as we know it; it is not probable that we embody the highest achievement possible in life, thought, and love. Who knows, indeed, but that evolution may be able to bring forth, nay, has not already brought forth immortals?”

— M. GUYAU.

CHAPTER IV

Two things are usually taken for granted in all discussions concerning future life. One is the essential immortality of the soul. The other is that the same kind and quality of soul is common to all men. Are these assumptions defensible? To merely raise the question will seem preposterous to some. Nevertheless, the question must be faced. For the present I postpone any attempt to define sharply the term *soul*, and use it in its popular sense, which is for this stage of the argument sufficiently definite.

It is commonly assumed that each individual soul has had a beginning, but is so constituted and compounded of such stuff that it is intrinsically imperishable. This belief lies at the bottom of the current conceptions of Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. To many it will be a surprise to be assured that this is not a Christian doctrine at all, but a pagan one. Nor is it now, nor has it ever been, the general belief even in paganism. The great mass of savage

and semicivilized men have never had any clear opinion upon the matter either way. Indeed, they do not think of "the soul" at all in the way we do. They often have a sort of vague notion of a shadowy double of the individual which may for a while flit about his tomb or roam in happy hunting grounds. But they do not possess any such abstract conceptions as "eternal," or "immortal," or "self-existent." When they advance farther in the path of thought they either think of the personality maintaining a kind of family, corporate perpetuity, as throughout Eastern Asia generally; or else they think of the individual as seeking to lose his identity, and finally losing it in Nirvana, which, for the individual consciousness at any rate, is an end of being. The general thought of intelligent paganism could hardly be better stated or by a more competent witness than Wu Ting Fang, the present Chinese Ambassador to the United States.

"What I understand by religion is a system and doctrine of worship. As such it recognizes the existence of a divine supreme being and of spirits having control of human destinies, who want to bring man back from the errors of his ways by holding up the fear of everlasting

punishment to him, and by promising him everlasting happiness for goodness. One of its cardinal doctrines is that there is such a thing as life after death. I must confess that the thought of the immortality of the soul is pleasant. I wish it were true; but all the reasoning of Plato cannot make it anything more than a strong probability. I am not aware that in the advance of modern science we have advanced one step more from uncertainty than did Plato. It must not be said that Confucius denies the existence of these things, but regards all speculation upon them as useless and impracticable. He would be called an agnostic in these days. 'What is death?' asked a disciple of him, and he replied, 'You don't know life yet; how can you know about death?' Such are the guarded words of Confucius on this subject. Life itself is full of mysteries too deep for human thought to fathom. There is no use in trying to tear apart the veil of death to take a peep at the place beyond. No one has ever been able to add one tittle of evidence concerning the future of man after death and of the world of spirits. Confucius was therefore right in dismissing these subjects without giving a direct answer. Horace Greeley once said: 'Those who discharge promptly and faithfully

all their duties to those who still live in the flesh can have but little time left for peering into the life beyond the grave. It is better to attend to each in its proper order.' This is not an unfair statement of the aim of Confucius. Confucianism undertakes to guide man only through this world. His system is accordingly intensely human and practical. He does not speculate upon what will be after death."

The fact is that only in Christendom and Islam is the essential immortality of the individual spirit assumed. To the contention that belief in eternal life has been held always and everywhere, and by all men, the only reply is that the facts are not so. It is as far as possible from being true to-day. The overwhelming majority of men are now, as has always been the case, at too low a stage of intellectual development to comprehend the thought. The most that can be said is that there is among most people a rather vague and incoherent belief that a tenuous kind of existence of the individual will continue for a greater or longer period after death. But it is at its clearest only a phantom-like being, and they do not conceive of it as eternal, nor does the term eternal convey any meaning to them. Moreover, the testimony

of the most trustworthy observer is that from among many peoples this whole set of ideas is entirely absent. The Bushman of South Africa, the Veddahs of Ceylon, the Blacks of Australia, the Diggers of Utah, and such like do not seem to have any more idea of a post-obituary existence than do the beasts of the field. Indeed, the history of thought witnesses, as clearly as it can witness to anything, that it is not until a really high stage of intellectual development is reached that the idea of any future life emerges, and that a belief in the soul as a self-existent entity is not reached until intellection has well-nigh reached its summit. Not until Democritus and Empedocles, and Plato and Socrates, and Epicurus and Seneca, become possible does the idea of immortality emerge. At a date no doubt much earlier, the Egyptians had wrought out scientifically their scheme of the future life; but they by no means predicated it of all men, but only of the "good," and of those only after they had been rendered immortal by union with Osiris at the trial to which each departed one was at once introduced. The "evil" who failed in the test perished out of existence either at once, or after a lengthened agony. Among the early Hebrews the idea was hardly present at all. Says

Grand Rabbi Stein : " What causes most surprise in reading the Pentateuch is the silence it seems to keep respecting the most fundamental and consoling truths. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body are able powerfully to fortify man against passion and vice, and to strengthen his steps in the rugged paths of virtue. But one searches in vain for these truths which he desires so ardently. He does not find either them or the simple doctrine of the resurrection of the dead."

Among the later Jews, the contemporaries of Jesus, the notions concerning the soul and its destiny were so incoherent and contradictory that it seems hopeless to attempt their reconstruction. Speaking broadly, they did not conceive of the soul as an entity separate and independent of the body. The dream of a corporate or tribal immortality which they had held for ages before their eyes had for the most part rendered them careless concerning the destiny of the individual. If "Israel" were to abide to the ages of ages it mattered little what became of his children one by one. The most intelligent and influential section, the Sadducees, were frank materialists. They believed "neither in angels nor demons nor the resurrection of the dead." The Pharisees were

divided into paltry schools, and were busy debating such trivial puzzles as to whether or not one should rise with his clothes or naked, whether he would burrow like a mole underneath the earth so as to rise in the sacred soil of Judea, or rise in pagan soil and be instantly rapt through the air to the holy land. But none believed in or expected resurrection or immortality for any but the members of the chosen race. An immortality belonging to man, and based upon the essential deathlessness of the soul, was utterly foreign to their thought. Dr. Piepenbring states their belief thus:—

“Along with the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead which arose and was developed among the Palestinian Jews, we see the doctrine of the immortality of the soul take shape among the Jews of Alexandria. It appears for the first time in the apocryphal book of Wisdom. According to this book souls pre-exist, and are confined in the body as in a prison. The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God; after having passed through the crucible of trial they shine, they judge nations, they govern peoples; thus the righteous will live forever. The wicked seem to be fated to annihilation. These ideas are still farther

developed by Philo, from whose writings it clearly appears that they were borrowed from Plato."

I pass over now the teaching of Christ and the New Testament. That must form the basis of the truth we seek later on, and must be examined more at leisure. The question to be asked at present is, What did the people of the early Christian Church, say during the first four hundred years, believe generally concerning the soul and its possible destiny? We need not be surprised to find that their beliefs were confused and contradictory. No matter what the teaching of Christ may or may not have been, the early Christians came to it with presuppositions and habits of thought already formed. It is never possible for any man to disentangle himself at once from his old beliefs in taking in a new truth. The most that he can do is to modify those previous convictions of his which seem to lie in immediate contact with the new truth. But underneath those there is the whole contents of his mind. The new truth sinks down amongst these and is colored by them. When he tries to express the truth which he has newly received, he can only do so in the language and thoughts which he already possesses. It requires long time for the new ideas either to

work over to its own uses the old mental forms, or to escape from them by building up an entirely new imagery about itself. The teaching of Christ could not escape this inevitable necessity. This is strikingly true of the Christian ideas concerning the significance of His own sufferings and death. These occurred in Judea and were recorded by Jews, but in being transmitted through Hebrew minds they received a Hebrew coloring which to a large extent they still retain. The Great Surrender was interpreted in Hebrew sacrificial terms. The Light of the world shone out through the stained windows of the temple of Judaism. This refraction and discoloration must be allowed for by the world which would see the Sun in his glory. The same fact is of even more significance in the case of the early Christian belief concerning the belief in personal immortality. Both Greek and Roman preconceptions affected this as well as Hebrew ones. A careful study of the ante-Nicene "Fathers" can but convince one that in and among them a number of ethnic notions were struggling to express, each in its own terms, the truth which Christ had dropped among them. The early Christians had all been reared either in the religions of Judea or Greece or Rome. Those among

them who had been reared Jews unconsciously transferred their idea of a corporate or tribal immortality from their old faith to their new, and their imaginations were filled with the hope of a "Second Coming" and a "New Jerusalem." Those who were Greeks brought to the new religion the Platonic idea that the individual soul is indestructible, being in fact an articulate portion of the substance of the mind of God. Those of Roman antecedents, having no inherited belief in a future life of any kind, were better prepared to comprehend the truth of Christ. The interaction of all these fragments of previous philosophy produced a confusion and uncertainty of mind which was not clarified for five centuries. Then the masterful Augustine, the man who fixed the lines in which the thought of the civilized world ran from the sixth century to the nineteenth, took Plato's doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul, disengaged it from metempsychosis and transmigration, and gained for it that general credence which it has held to this day. Clement (I. *Epis.* xxvi.) teaches the resurrection of the good, and proves it by an appeal to the well-known phenomenon of the phoenix rising from his ashes, but seems to have no expectation of future life for the

wicked. Justin Martyr in one place (*I. Apol.* xvii.) expects the resurrection both of just and unjust, and proves it by appealing to the recognized fact that departed human souls are even now in a state of sensation, as is shown by their being evoked by magi and dream-senders, as well as at the oracles of Dodona and Pytho. In another place, however (*Dial. Tryph.* v.), he expressly denounces and dismisses the Platonic doctrine that the soul is immortal. Athenagoras (*De Resurrec.*) takes for granted unqualifiedly the native immortality of the soul, and makes a striking argument for the resurrection of the body. Tertullian in his treatises *On the Soul* and *On the Resurrection of the Flesh* gives by far the fullest presentation of what was commonly believed in his circles; but it is quite impossible to make him consistent with himself or with other Christian writers of the same period. Upon the whole, however, he leaves the impression, afterward confirmed and fixed by Augustine, that he believes the soul to have an independent existence of its own, and to be of its own nature indestructible. The truth of the case seems to be that as the Greek influence gained the domination in the early Church the Platonic doctrine of a natural immortality which it brought with it came to be

accepted. The notion was withstood from the beginning as being subversive of the very essence of Christianity. Theophilus (*Ad. Autolyceum* ii. 27), Irenæus (*Adv. Hæres.* ii. 34), Clement of Alexandria (*The Pedagogues*, i. 3), Arnobius (*Cont. Gent.* ii. 24), and, most weighty of all, Athanasius in his treatise on the *Incarnation of the Word of God*, all strenuously fought against it as a pagan error which brought to naught the work of Christ. They were defeated, however, and the conception prevailed which is vulgarly current to-day, of an immortal soul and a mortal body, temporarily joined, then severed, then reunited in an imperishable personality. Its currency has probably confused and obstructed the work of Christ among men more than all other obstacles combined. A pagan speculation has masqueraded so long as an elemental Christian truth that now, when the intelligent world is well disposed to receive and comprehend Jesus' revelation of the life to come, Plato stands across the path and is commonly mistaken for Christ.

“Whenever any scientific revolution has driven out old modes of thought, the new views that take their place must justify themselves by the permanent or increasing satisfaction which they are capable of affording to those spiritual demands which cannot be put off or ignored.” — LOTZE.

CHAPTER V

It has been taken for granted during ages that "Man" occupies a unique and solitary place at the head of the rank of living things, with a wide, if not impassable, chasm between him and them. For the purposes of the naturalist this is satisfactory. But for the purposes of the psychologist it is quite misleading. The classification rests upon physical data solely. Psychic phenomena disregard it utterly. For example:—

"There are races of existing men whose powers of language seem still in the transition stage between articulate and inarticulate speech. This seems to be the case with the Bushmen and Hottentots of South Africa, whose vocal utterances consist largely of a series of peculiar clicks that are certainly not articulate speech, though on the road toward it. The Pygmies of Central Africa seem similarly to occupy an intermediate position in the development of language. Those who have endeavored to talk with them speak of their utterance as

being inarticulate sound. It appears to be a sort of link between inarticulate and articulate speech. In short, the great abyss which was of old thought to lie between the language of man and that of the lower animals has largely vanished through the labors of philologists, and we can trace stepping-stones over every portion of the wide gap.”¹

The same thing we have above seen to be true concerning reason, memory, sympathy, and love. The simple fact is that in the attempt to trace the origin, development, and destiny of the soul the naturalist's classification of “man” and “animal” must be disregarded. In advance one dare not say where the line between immortal and mortal creatures will be found. It may conceivably coincide with the one which marks off *Genus Homo: Class Mammalia: Order Primates*, or it may be found to run much below that, so as to include many of man's humble kinsmen. Or it may be found necessary to settle upon a line running irregularly through and amidst the ranks of man. The soul has its own laws and announces its own requirements. It may turn out that all whom we call men are not Man. For natural science it is true that “God hath made of one blood all

¹ Morris, “Man and his Ancestor,” p. 110.

nations of men for to dwell upon the earth." They breed together, and that settles the question of physical relationship. But there are psychic relationships between man and animal quite as intimate and as real as the physical connection of man with man. Measured by psychic standards, the interval between the lowest man and the highest is a hundred fold greater than that between the lowest man and the highest brute. It may be humiliating, but it is true, nevertheless, that we are far more closely related to the animals on the spiritual than we are on the bodily side. A comparative anatomist would distinguish at sight between the fossil bone of a man and one of a fossil ape. But let a certain action involving thought be described to him, and he may be quite unable to say whether the actors are men or beasts. For example, here is one related by James Forbes in his "Oriental Memoirs":—

"One of the females had been killed and the body carried to our tent. Forty or fifty of the tribe soon gathered around the tent, chattering furiously and threatening an attack, from which they were only diverted by the display of the guns, whose effects they perfectly understood. But while the others retreated the leader stood his ground, continuing his threatening chatter.



Finding this of no avail, he came to the door of the tent alone, moaning sadly, and by his gestures seemed to beg for the dead body. When it was given him he took it up sorrowfully in his arms and carried it away to his waiting companions." Is this a story of monkeys or of men?

What we are seeking is a spiritual organism which would be at once worth keeping permanently in existence, and which has been sufficiently developed to cohere through and after the shock of the dissolution of its physical basis. If we must predicate immortality of every sentient being which possesses reason, affection, and ethical faculty, then we must enlarge the borders of Hades to receive innumerable animals. If we demand a higher psychic basis to make continuous existence possible, then we may well be forced to deny it to multitudes of beings whom we call men. There has seemed to be no deliverance from this dilemma, because we have assumed that the naturalist's classification of man and animal, which is real in the physical realm, is also valid in the psychic sphere. It is difficult to see any sufficient reason for continuing this contention any longer. While it was believed that all mankind were the children of a single pair, specially created, only a

few thousand years ago, the difficulty was insuperable. But now we know better. Geology has unfolded the rocky leaves of earth's history and found man's mark inscribed æons since. His descent from pre-human and semi-human ancestry is as well established as any human belief can ever be. To say that "Evolution is not proven" is simply trifling with truth. Nothing is ever proven or can be in the sense which that objection demands. But it is so generally accepted that the world of thought and knowledge has ceased even to defend it. Why it should be challenged and resisted it is not easy to understand. Probably it is because it seems to run counter to a set of beliefs which have been read into Holy Scripture. That ancient and marvellous story of Genesis greatly needs to be rescued from its friends. Read it afresh, and see how generally it corresponds to the facts as they are now known to be. It is the record of a series of selections and rejections, determined in the interest of the slowly developing ethical family. Jacob is selected because righteousness continues in his line, and Esau is rejected. Abraham is selected, and all the splendid civilization of the great plain is allowed to fade from sight and being. Noah is chosen, and the corrupt race of Tubal and

Jubal are allowed to pass away to the music of their own harps and the clinking of their own anvils. Cain and the City which he builded go out in darkness, and Seth, in whose line goodness grows, is chosen. What else is "Adam" but "a man," in whom spiritual faculty first rose to the capacity to know good and evil? That he was the first and only creature of his kind upon the earth the story in no wise intimates. That generations of devout people have so read it is not strange. But that they should insist upon continuing to read it so is strange indeed. The story is as true as it is wonderful. It may well be that there have been innumerable Adams, and that many such are alive to-day. So long as there are races in human form, undeveloped, savage, rude, ignorant, immoral, naked without being ashamed, so long their path upward to true humanity can only be through the leadership of one here and there who has passed his fellows and caught, at least, a passing glimpse of the tree of life. When such a one has reached this stage of ethical knowledge and choice, he must, with more or less sadness, leave the lower innocence of his native Eden. He can no longer have pleasant companionship with those of his kin. And this is true, whether his Eden be by the land of

Havilah or in the South Sea, or in the slum of a great city. We must acknowledge and face the fact that for the requirements of soul not all members of *Homo Sapiens* are men. To determine in the case of any individual whether or not he has attained to the possession of a soul capable of continuance is difficult indeed. But it is no more and no less difficult than it is to decide at what point of his embryonic growth he became human from the naturalist's standpoint. The ovum of a man and of a dog are absolutely indistinguishable. The human embryo runs through and recapitulates in a marvellous way the line of ascent from the low order of life through which the race has climbed. It has been generally taken for granted that he becomes possessed of a "soul" at some point between the instant of the fertilization of the ovum and his issue from the womb. But for this there is not, nor ever has been, a scintilla of evidence. The marvellous insight, which the modern microscope has now made possible, into cell and germ life has made it evident that the very germs themselves have an antecedent history as strange and as complex as that of the embryo. They also move, choose, select, repel, show preferences and aversions, in a word they appear to have personalities of their own

as really as does the new-born babe. A new individual does, indeed, come into existence at the moment of conception. But it is not an independent entity in respect either of its psychic or its physical features, but is the product of the blending of the two parental cells. Each of these cells has a previous personality and a previous history. The biogenesis of the soul cannot any longer be concluded between conception and birth. The man with the microscope in the laboratory and the experimental psychologist have together traced its path both backward and upward, far enough to make it evident that the narrow limit within which the soul's origin and history has heretofore been confined can no longer contain it. It is already clear that the psychic life which we call soul in man, instinct in the beast, and affinity in the germ cell is the same thing; that it develops according to laws of its own; that it is from first to last correlated with an organized material structure; that at certain stages in its upward movement it takes on new and strange forms and qualities which could not at all be predicted from any study of it at a previous stage. But the thing of supreme importance for our purpose is that the upward steps or stages of physical evolution do not at all

coincide with the steps or stages of psychic evolution. Reason, of a high order, for example, is found among the coelentera, seems to lie dormant throughout the reptiles, and shows itself at unexpected and incalculable places among mammalia. Does reason in man take on any new quality in virtue of which every individual becomes immortal? The secret which we long to discover is this: Does the psychic life of an individual at any stage of evolution ever attain to such a high, stable, and independent existence of its own that it will be able to subsist in spite of the disintegration of the physical organism with which it is immediately correlated? What are the conditions upon which a survival must depend? Are these conditions satisfied in the psychic lives to be found among the lower animals? Are the conditions present in the case of every individual of that race which we call man? Or is the possibility of individual immortality only reached at a point more or less advanced in the progress of man himself? In fine, is man *immortal*? — or is he only *immortable*?

“Learn the mystery of progression duly,
Call not each successive change decay;
But know we only hold our treasures truly
When it seems as if they passed away;

“Nor dare to blame God’s gifts for incompleteness;
In that want their safety lies; they roll
Toward some infinite depth of love and sweetness,
Bearing onward the reluctant soul.”

— A. A. PROCTER.

CHAPTER VI

JUST what is it which overweighs to-day the hope of future life? When reduced to its simplest terms, is it not that we have found mind to be much more closely bound up with matter than had been supposed? Underlying the popular belief in a resurrection and future life, there have been heretofore a set of notions, partly scientific and partly theological, which are surely becoming untenable under the influence of increasing knowledge. The uneducated and unthinking man still believes, no doubt, that we are all the descendants of a first man whose body God fashioned mechanically out of the earth's matter, not more than four or five thousand years ago, that this body was lifeless and inert until God by a second specific act placed within it an immortal soul. His soul was to his body very much what live steam is to a motionless engine. It was created apart from the body, and complete in itself. It possessed the maximum of intellectual vigor, and was morally faultless. The *man* thus constituted

was perfect, and would have been undying had he not by a wanton choice forfeited his immortality by an act of disobedience.

This conception is so naïve and simple, so easily presented before the mind, and has been so long operative, that it is very difficult indeed to disengage it. Many a man who has long since dismissed it as impossible still believes it when he is off his guard. But the intelligent world generally has become convinced that the facts were not thus. So far as the body is concerned, at any rate, it has been created by God through the agency of a series of secondary causes well-nigh infinite. It is the last term in a course of evolution which reaches backward in time and downward in scale to the lowest cell of primordial life, if not beyond. And the same appears to be true of the mind, which, as we have seen, begins to show its presence in creatures far below man in the ascending scale. The life of the body and the life of the spirit seem to have made their long journey together. And the relation of spirit and body is so intimate that every thought, sensation, emotion, is connected with some specific molecular movement of some portion of the cerebral or nervous substance. The body is an engine which is fed with food as fuel. This fuel is consumed and converted

into tissues. The phenomena produced are digestion, locomotion, sensation, and thought. Every act of thought or will involves the consumption of just so much matter. The length of time required to convey a physical sensation from an extremity to the brain and send back an answer in terms of consciousness has been actually measured. The experimenter in the laboratory has weighed approximately the amount of tissue consumption required in solving a sum in arithmetic, a game of chess, or in an emotion of anger or love. The practical result of all such experimentation and observation has been to make it increasingly difficult to believe that the soul has an independent existence, and that that existence can survive after the cessation of bodily functions. Those who feel this difficulty the most keenly are often those who most ardently wish for immortality. But this wish is overladen by their knowledge. Thus far it has not affected their lives. They love righteousness and hate iniquity. They are possibly all the more strenuous in their obedience to duty because they fear that they might be less so without any ulterior peril. They do not wish to either live or die like the beasts, but they fear they must. They lay their dead away out of sight with a

regret so keen and so final that they do not care to speak about it. Their loves are all the more engrossing because they cannot see any possibility of the dear companionship continuing after the present conditions shall have been broken. They have no quarrel with the simple faith of him who looks confidently for a resurrection of the decayed bodily form. They rather envy him. Indeed, one of the deadliest temptations is that which solicits one to push all his knowledge away by a violent act of will so that he may believe the thing for which he so greatly longs. The most potent and elemental of instincts is here opposed by the highest and best-established knowledge. The hope of immortality is but the instinct of self-protection carried to its highest term. The dread of ceasing to be is common to all sentient beings from the lowest to the highest. But, also, experience has painfully shown that the desire to live is impotent to maintain one in living.

Not a few noble souls have sought relief from this distress by dwelling upon one of those broad facts which the modern study of life has brought out so vividly. It is easy to see that no individual atom of life is altogether wasted in the mighty onflow. When its in-

dividual life ceases, it at least enriches the soil. It contributes its mite toward better things and better beings to come after. Nature, the mighty master builder, wastes nothing. Each lower order of life is the scaffold upon which a higher is reared. Each overthrown individual can at least become a grain in the mortar which cements the whole together. Myriads must perish in order that one may live and advance. Should not this thought suffice for any life, some ask? The aspiration need seek no finer expression than that in which George Eliot clothed it :—

“O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence,
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that control
With growing sway the life of man.
This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strove to follow : may I reach
That purest Heaven : be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.”

None could wish to question or cheapen this high thought. But it is more than doubtful whether it can be anything but the thought of a great soul trying to make the best of a

broken hope. The atmosphere of melancholy which envelopes its very phrases is significant. The simple fact is that there is nothing in our experience which gives a sufficient expectation of good in humanity yet to be, to make up to one for the defeat of his own personal existence. "Could we," as Mr. John Fiske says, "but know that our present lives are working together toward some good end, it would be of less consequence whether we were individually to endure. To the dog under the knife of the experimenter, the world is a world of pure evil; yet could the poor beast but understand the alleviation of human suffering to which he is contributing, he would be forced to own that this is not quite true, and if he were also a heroic or Christian dog the thought would perhaps take away from death its sting." Perhaps. But to gain this solace the poor dog would have first to be convinced that the future man to be benefited would be intrinsically more valuable than a dog, and also that beyond the supposed man there is some good goal to be reached whose achievement would make worth while all that went before. But just this is what is not evident.

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?

So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That, I considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

* * * * *

So careful of the type ? but no
From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, A thousand types are gone,
I care for nothing, all shall go.

No: no succedaneum will suffice. I wish to live, I, in my own proper person, with memory, self-consciousness, will, and the love which is a part of myself. No projection of myself into the future as an influence will satisfy the craving. But how can this be if that nexus of sensation, thought, and will which I call "I" is dependent upon the interaction of molecules in organized matter?

“There are thinkers who, because the phenomena of life and consciousness are associated in their minds by undeviating experience with the action of material organs, think it an absurdity *per se* to imagine it possible that those phenomena can exist under any other conditions. But they should remember that the uniform coexistence of one fact with another does not make the one fact a part of the other or the same with it. The relation of thought to the brain is no metaphysical necessity, but simply a constant coexistence within the limits of observation.” — JOHN STUART MILL.

CHAPTER VII

WE have dwelt long upon the newly felt realization of the fact of the reciprocal relation of mind and body. It is time now to turn to the other fact, viz. that mind is something else than the product of organized matter. The living human body is a material machine, weighing a certain number of pounds and occupying a certain cubic space. It is acted upon by all forms of physical energy known. Gravitation pulls it, heat sets it vibrating, electric energy stimulates it, chemical energy produces its reactions within and about it. Suppose you set apart the food which is to sustain a man, and the air which he is to breathe during a given period. Let the food be weighed and analyzed. It weighs so many pounds, ounces, and scruples. It contains nitrogen, carbon, phosphorus, and what not. The food is introduced. Chemical and physical action set to work upon it. It is broken up into suitable form to be carried to every remotest tissue. The lungs take in oxygen, and the red blood

corpuscles carry it with them in their swift race to the ultimate cells where it is needed. The nerves and brain, bones and tissue, are built up, nourished, and stimulated. But now, if we only have the instruments of sufficient delicacy, we can weigh again the increment of the body, and the excreta, and find again every atom of material energy which entered the body, and account for them in terms of matter. Every unit of heat which has entered the body or has been produced by chemical reaction within it can be accounted for in terms of heat. Every unit of chemical energy which has acted has also reacted, and can be accounted for in terms of chemistry. Nothing is lost, nothing lessened, nothing changed. Every unit of physical energy expended at any point in the cycle has, at most, only been changed into some other form of physical energy. In a word, through all the protean changes belonging to the nutrition of a living body matter remains matter, and can be accounted for in terms of matter, no scruple of it being lost or unaccounted for. The law of the Conservation of Energy has been satisfied. But at some point in the cycle of atomic flow it has touched that other cycle of sensation, thought, self-consciousness. The matter has not been changed into psychic

energy, for it is all accounted for in terms of matter. The most that can be said is that the two cycles touch at points which have been fairly well ascertained. But the unhesitating verdict of physical science agrees with that of our own unsophisticated self-consciousness that we have here two actual and inconvertible realities. Says Professor Huxley, "I know nothing in the name of biology, and never hope to know anything, of the steps by which the passage from molecular movement to states of consciousness is effected." "The two things," said the late Professor Clifford, "are on two utterly different platforms; the physical facts go along by themselves, and the psychical facts go along by themselves." The longing for a larger life, which is now so painfully defeated by the deep realization of the close implication of psychical with physical organization, can only be reënforced by bringing back vividly before consciousness the fact that, after all has been said, mind is essentially something else than the output of organized matter. It does not yet appear whether or not it is immortal in the case of the individual, but it is much to be reassured that whatever may be its future my soul is a reality now. We can listen with serenity to Professor Haeckel when he affirms that "the

whole marvellous panorama of life that spreads over the surface of our globe is; in the last analysis, transformed sunlight. The progress of technical science has made it possible for us to convert the different physical and psychical forces from one form to another; heat may be changed into molar movement; this in turn into light or sound, and then electricity, and so forth. Accurate measurement of the quantity of force which is used in the metamorphosis has shown that it is constant and unchanged."

That is precisely the point. It *is* constant and unchanged. When the sun is old and the moon is cold and the stars have fallen, all the sunlight which has ever played upon them could be weighed by one whose scales were great enough, and every impulse of it be accounted for in terms of solar energy. But in the course of its stupendous cycle, it had relations with something which utterly refuses to be defined in terms of solar heat or any of its derivatives. That something else is sensation, mind, personality. Professor Haeckel stands alone in his unwarranted dogmatizing. Physical scientists almost unanimously refuse to go with him. They solace us with the assurance that self-consciousness has not misled us by false pretences, claiming to be something when

she was not. When the last word has been spoken, it is that physical evolution and psychological evolution have moved with linked arms toward a common goal, but that neither has ever been confused with the other. If one will hold this truth before him steadfastly and for a sufficient time, he will realize its strange power to reënforce in him that sense of spiritual reality which threatened to be overlaid and extinguished by the weight of the physical universe.

“Speaking for myself, I can see no insuperable difficulty in the notion that at some period in the evolution of humanity this divine spark may have acquired sufficient concentration and steadiness to survive the wreck of material forms and endure forever. Such a crowning wonder seems to me no more than the fit climax to a creative work that has been ineffably beautiful and marvellous in all its myriad changes.” — JOHN FISKE.

CHAPTER VIII

THE problem of immortality, that is, of potential immortality, has been hopelessly obscured by the traditional presumption that all those living creatures who are classed as Man on physical grounds are also Man on psychical grounds. This being assumed, the question of a future life becomes one concerning a race and not concerning individuals. This explains why all arguments for immortality have been so unconvincing. They have tried to prove too much. All those considerations which would establish immortality for all men, in virtue of their qualities which they possess as men, are equally valid for many of the lower animals. I wish here to bring forward and call attention once again to the fact, already noted, that the classification of Man as a separate species is made solely upon zoölogical grounds. It is based upon peculiarities of his skeleton, chiefly. It is a classification good enough for the zoölogist, but it is utterly confusing to the psychologist. Those broad lines of demarkation which

mark off species from species in the ascent of bodily function, do not at all coincide with the great steps by which mental evolution has climbed. The point at which we shall probably have to look for the emergence of immortality is not at that which separates man from the brute, but at that which separates between one kind of man and all the rest. The story is told of a distinguished Frenchman, who, to the long argument of a friend against the possibility of a future life, replied: "You say you are not immortal? Very probably you are right. Probably you are not; but I am." This is much more than a happy repartee. It is essentially the solution of a problem otherwise insoluble. Whatever may turn out to be the difficulty of drawing such a line among men does not concern us at this stage of the argument. It is sufficient for the present to point out that it is far less difficult to draw the line this way than in any other way. It is hardly at all realized how nearly the lowest man and the highest animal approximate each other on the physical side, to say nothing of the more important fact that their psychical qualities overlap. The human race has had a long history, certainly tens of thousands and possibly hundreds of thousands of years. During by far the greater portion of this long pe-

riod he was psychically far nearer to the brute than we realize. There is nothing whatever to indicate that he possessed a moral sense differing greatly in degree or differing at all in kind from that manifested by his *infra*-human ancestors. He did not know good and evil, and he was naked without sense of shame. But the more important fact is that he still exists at the same low stage of development in very considerable numbers. It is essential that this fact should be realized. There is no need to search for the "missing link." The connection of the orders of ascending life is not well represented by the simile of a chain and links. It is rather a line, bearing upward with an immensely eccentric curve. If that curve can be measured in any considerable segment of its length, the rest of it can be calculated, no matter how many gaps be inaccessible. To calculate the equation of a curve it is not necessary to have it in sight throughout its whole extent. Between the lowest man now living and the highest, there is at least a distance quite as great as that imagined between the lowest man and the highest form which preceded him. We but faintly realize, either, how low in the scale of being the lowest man is, or how high the highest is. Types of humanity so low that their

very existence was unbelievable have lurked in the hidden places of the earth for ages unsuspected. The stories of the past concerning them were dismissed as myths and legends and childish tales. One of the most wonderful additions to the sum of the knowledge of the nineteenth century has been their rediscovery. It is a significant coincidence that, just as Darwin's book on the "Descent of Man" was issued, Du Chaillu returned from tropical Africa with his story of the Pygmies. The story seemed so incredible and monstrous that the old Frenchman has lived to this day bearing the stigma of unveracity, though his account has been long since verified. The facts concerning this primitive man and his congeners have been well and carefully brought together by Morris in "Man and his Ancestors," which I follow. Dr. Schweinfurth met with them on the Wells River, in four degrees north latitude. The tribe found by him was composed of individuals averaging about four feet in height, none being over four feet and a half,—about the height of an American boy of eight years of age. He describes them as "having large heads, huge ears, and very ape-like faces. Their arms are long and lank, the chest flat and narrow, widening below to support a huge

abdomen, the legs short and bandy, the walk a waddling motion, suggesting strangely that of a gibbon. They are also ape-like in their incessant grimacing, twitching of the eyebrows, nodding and wagging of the head, and remarkable agility." Stanley describes one of them which he saw, as having "small, cunning, monkey-like eyes, close and deeply set, protruding lips, prominent abdomen, narrow, flat chest, sloping shoulders, long arms, feet strongly turned inward, and very short lower legs. He was a little over four feet high, of a light chocolate color, with a thin fringe of whiskers, his legs bowed and without any developed calf. His body was covered with a thick, fur-like hair, nearly half an inch long." They wear no clothes whatever, build no houses, cannot count above two, the adults manifest no trace of affection for father, mother, brother, or sister. Their language is undeveloped, consisting of clicks and inarticulate vocals. Two of them were brought to Italy in 1875, where, in the course of several years, they learned to speak and read Italian, and one of them showed some proficiency in music. Their intellectual development stopped, however, at about the point usually reached by a European child of ten years old, and could not be carried any farther.

Their life period is about forty years, in no case having been known to reach fifty. Their skull capacity is about in the ratio of 27, that of the average American being about 40, and that of the gorilla 20.

Now, the zoölogist, basing his classification upon peculiarities of skeleton and integument, will classify them under *Homo Sapiens*. But when mental and spiritual standards are applied, what are they? Are they "man" or not? The attempt has been made to account for them as local instances of degeneration from a higher type. This attempt breaks down, however, in face of the fact that they manifestly belong to a numerous group, extending geographically from the southwest point of Africa to far Eastern Asia. Tribes evidently akin to them are found in Africa from the Cape to the Sahara, in Madagascar, in Malacca and the Andaman Islands, in Ceylon and the Philippines, in India and Borneo. They cannot be explained by any theory of degradation. They need no explanation if the simple facts be faced. There is no difficulty in the case except that which is caused by the predetermination to draw a hard and fast line between man and animal, and to range every individual man upon one side of

that line, and every animal on the other. If the fact be admitted that, for psychical purposes, the line does not run in that place, the perplexity vanishes. But if it be insisted, on the other hand, that either all men are by their constitution immortal, or that none are, then it will in the long run prove more reasonable to deny it of all men than to believe it of all. Beings are living on the earth to-day at every conceivable stage between that of the semi-human Akka, who has no religion, no superstitions, no developed moral sense, and the enlightened American or European Christian whose sense of moral personality and self-consciousness is far stronger than his sense of physical being. It appears to be most reasonable that at some point, yet to be defined, but between these two extremes, the "power of an endless life" is reached.

“I can believe; this dread machinery
Of sin and sorrow would confound me else.
Devised all pain, at most expenditure
Of pain by who devised pain — to evolve
By new machinery in counterpart,
The moral qualities of Man — how else? —
To make him live in turn, and be beloved,
Creature and self-sacrificing too,
And thus eventually Godlike.”

— “The Ring and the Book”

CHAPTER IX

WE have now reached the point where the crucial question must be faced. If we are driven to believe that immortality may be predicated of some member of the race, or of one kind of men but not of all, then we must ask, Where is the line to be drawn? Or, to put it in another way, At what point in the upward movement does the individual personality take on those qualities which may enable it to survive the death of the body? Upon what does immortality depend? What are its conditions? How can those conditions be fulfilled? Are they at all under the control of the individual will? Or is the individual on entering into the eternal life as passive and helpless as he is in being ushered into this world from the womb after the full term of embryonic development is completed?

Before offering any reply to these questions it will be well to stop long enough to make one

or two needful distinctions. In the first place, there have been not a few, both in ancient and modern times, who have maintained the truth of a "Conditional Immortality." But they have in every case assumed that all human beings are by nature on the same level of being, possessed intrinsically of the same quality. If some become immortal and others do not, it is only because immortality is, as it were, impressed upon some from the outside. It is a gift, arbitrarily bestowed. It is because one has been born of the Holy Spirit in baptism, and another has not; or because one has partaken of the imperishable body and blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, and another has not; or it is because one has by a deliberate act of will "accepted Christ" and on the instant been "born again," or such like. The "condition" which the advocates of conditional immortality have laid down has always been an extraneous, arbitrary, or artificial condition. What we maintain is something differing radically from all these. No doubt each and all of the conditions above named will be found to be concerned, but the distinction itself is far deeper, more natural and reasonable, even though it be far more difficult to state. Speaking plainly, it is a biological process we

are seeking to trace, and a biological classification we attempt to discover. It may be that the biological classification we are in search of may turn out to be also a religious one. We believe it will. But it will be religious because it corresponds to an actual reality already existing, and not because of an arbitrary divine arrangement. What we maintain is that, if any human life becomes capable of passing on into another life, with personality intact, it will be because such a life has already reached to a stage of spiritual fixedness and stability which will make survival "natural," and destruction "unnatural" to it, and that such an achievement, if reached at all, must be by an extension of the long path by which the soul has climbed up from the primordial slime.

Again, it is of the first importance that we should realize the limitations of the problem before us. I have used throughout the term *immortality* as equivalent to survival after death. It is necessary from this point on, however, either to avoid the word altogether or to reach an understanding as to the sense in which it is used. Speaking accurately, immortality is a quality which can never be predicated of a human soul at any stage of its existence, either here or hereafter. "God alone hath immortal-

ity" is not only a scriptural, but a scientific datum. "Eternity" is a category of the unconditioned. The soul is an organism. The condition of every organism continuing in being is that it shall be able to function, and that it shall correspond to its environment. This condition cannot possibly cease to bind in the next life, or in any subsequent life, any more than in this. In this sense we do not seek for immortality. Our quest is an humbler yet sufficiently momentous one. We simply try to ascertain from the data available whether we can find a means of transit for any human personality from this life to the next one. Whether, if that prove possible, its life shall there be brief or long is a question not now before us. When, if ever, we do face it, we may fairly expect to possess data for its solution which, in the nature of the case, are not now available. With this caution it will probably be more convenient to keep on using the term *immortality* meaning thereby an existence for the individual, longer or shorter, as the case may be, in the life beyond the present one.

The world teems with life. The sea swarms with fishes, the land is crowded with plants. Living things populate the surface, creep, and

burrow beneath the soil. From the great mastodon and his huge living children down to the minute germ cell, which the powerful microscope can barely discern, life is here in countless forms. Life is everywhere, in every drop of water, in every grain of dust, filling the still summer air with its multitudinous drone, roaring in the streets of men's great cities, crowding and choking in the forests of the tropics. Try as we may, we cannot adequately realize its abundance, its multitude, its myriad forms and ways. It emerges silent and unseen from inorganic matter, and crowds every step of the long, strange, tortuous path upward to its supreme manifestation in human self-consciousness. When we begin to study and examine its forms, one by one, we are arrested by the significant fact that the ultimate goal of each individual is to pass on to some other the life which it possesses. If it can only reproduce, it is ready to die. Its organs of reproduction are the ones to which all other are ministrant. Its provision of locomotion and digestion are but means to this end. Countless millions in the lower orders of animal life only exist long enough to copulate, and give up their lives in the act. In the vegetable world this is the law without exception. Through stem and

twig, through leaf and flower, it comes to seed. When it has done so much, it has served its purpose and falls into decay. Then comes into play the inexhaustible ingenuity of devices to begin again the cycle from the seeds. They are not left to chance, or rather the laws of chance are compelled to serve the purposes of life. There are hooks on the seeds to catch on the fleeces of moving animals; there are wings or balloons to float them on the wind; there is toothsome pulp to entice the bird to swallow the indigestible kernel and drop it in suitable soil; there are a thousand devices, all to the same purpose, which is to guarantee the transmission of life. To the same end the instincts and appetites are subsidized. The "imperious instinct of propagation" dominates all desires, is stronger than pain or even the fear of death. In all except the higher animal forms it is not even left to choice. Reproduce they must, even if it does cost life. In the whole organic world every other consideration is subordinated to the single purpose of keeping the stream of life flowing. Even the most complex human society is organized about this supreme necessity. This determination is so inexorable that, lest it might be defeated, a hundred thousand individuals are brought into

life only to perish, in order to make sure that from among them all one may reproduce. Even in man the provision for reproduction determines the whole plan of his being. His natural term of life is adjusted to the length of time required to reach puberty. When his power to reproduce declines, he begins to die. His intellectual powers are correlated with this movement. His social habits are ultimately fixed with reference to this need. "Be fruitful and multiply" is the primordial command stamped upon the very constitution of animate nature.

But once this truth has gained our assent, it leads us to confront the supreme difficulty. Life seems to be everything, and the *individual* nothing. If only the species can win its way forward and upward, the unit seems to be of no value. We appear to be caught in the current of a mighty moving stream of life which will assimilate our juices and sink us in the slime or fling us dead upon the shore without ruth even as without anger. The life is everything; the organism in which the life is for the moment conserved seems to be nothing. Now, if an individual immortality is to become possible, nothing less is necessary than a reversal of this elemental law. It is clear that

that can only be reached if an individual be found who is intrinsically stronger than his species. Up to this point life sweeps around everlastingly in a closed circle, from seed through plant or animal to seed again, and so about continually. If escape from it be ever possible it must be at a tangent, and by some kind of individual whose life orbit sweeps far enough away from its material centre to be caught in some mighty attraction from beyond. And, to continue the figure, the difference between the individual who passes on and the one who remains enchained within the circle of nature need only be infinitesimal, provided it occur at the right point. An illustration which may serve to make the matter plainer can be drawn from physical mathematics. Take the case of two bodies moving through space. One of them has for its path the extremest conic section, that is, a curve with the greatest possible eccentricity. The path of the other is a parabola. The difference between the two curves is literally infinitesimal. Yet moving in the one the body must ultimately return to the point from whence it started. By the other it must move out into infinite space. May we not similarly expect that a change correspondingly slight in the psychic

movement of an organism may produce a result equally important?

In the lowest order of life there are really no individuals at all. The amoeba is simply a speck of protoplasmic jelly, uniform and slightly sensitive. It has no limbs, organs, or members. To multiply, it only breaks in two. Each part is as much or as little offspring as it is parent or as it is self. Each half, in its turn, divides again, and so the propagation goes on. It cannot be said that individuality belongs to any of its units, for each unit is divisible, and it is the essence of personality to be indivisible. The thing which cannot be divided is the individual. In the next higher stage of being a sort of compound or communistic individuality begins to show, as in sponges, among animals, and through the vegetable world. Each sponge or plant or tree is a group of partially independent units deriving their sustenance in common. Not until a comparatively high stage of evolution has been reached does the actual individual appear "whose life is in himself." Then he appears only to live his little life, beget a child if he can, and perish. The incalculable multitude of living forms merge as it were into a mighty river flowing through the æons and dropping over the preci-

pice to death, more numerous than all the drops at Niagara. Nor does the spectacle cause moral distress or revolt until the individual atoms come to be of such consequence that we begin to rebel against the aimlessness of it all. No beast has been defrauded of any due because it has to die. Mere existence and sensation have been for it a positive boon, whether its life has been long or short. This is also true of the brutelike man, and, what is of more consequence, this is his own judgment in the case. He clings to life for its own sake, and the lower in the scale he is the more tenacious he is. Even Laertes can face the end with a light heart because he has had his life. Not till humanity reaches the stage of Hamlet does he begin to question whether to be or not to be. "Is life worth living?" is a question which cannot be asked until man has reached a very high sense of the value of the individual. At all earlier periods the reply is yes; or more likely the inquiry is quite unintelligible. Considering the whole human race from its primeval brutality until now, it is probable that the overwhelming majority have no unliquidated claim upon existence. They have had the gift of living, and have made of it all that could be made. There is nothing more due. But

there are many surely of which something more can be said. Their capacities are wider than their spheres. Their psychical life is stronger than their physical. Their affections are stronger than their appetites. Their spirits have established so many relations with other personalities, with nature as a whole, with ideals which are more real to their apprehension than is matter itself, with the Infinite Personality whom they feel enfolding themselves and nature in his arms, that to think of all this coming to naught because the foundation of the material body is cut from under it by death, brings to our feelings a sense of distress and essential unreasonableness which is intolerable. Such an one has already learned the secret of going beyond himself by his sympathies. He is an *individual*, as the inorganic crystal is, as the organized germ-cell is, as the brute is, as the animal man is, but he is something more. In common with all these he is under the law which subordinates the individual to the species and throws it away when it has fulfilled its use of reproduction. But he has, to some degree at any rate, and in some portion of his being, escaped from this law by having come into the possession of certain qualities which cannot be propagated by re-

production. He did not reach these qualities at the point where he became man by bodily structure, or by the possession of mind, but at an uncertain point high above that of primitive man. But whenever and however this new faculty is reached, we may fairly expect that it will in some way be preserved in being. This certitude does not come alone, or in the first place from religious faith, but from watching Nature's ways. One thing the scientist knows right well; that is, that Nature does not hesitate a moment to change or to reverse methods which she has used throughout long stretches of time whenever she has something to gain by such reversal. If it shall appear at any stage in the upward movement of being that more is gained by keeping the individual in a continued life than by breaking him up for sake of the species, we may by all analogy expect that Nature will find some way to do so. It would only be to repeat what has been done more than once before. The inexorable forces of gravitation and chemical affinity had their own way in the universe for an eternity, until they were arrested and turned about in the interest of life. Overproduction, death, and survival of the fittest had their ruthless sway until they were reversed in the inter-

est of affection. The supremacy of the race at the expense of the individual we may expect to continue just until something in the individual comes to be of more importance than that law, and no longer.

“Have you done
Descending? Here’s ourself, —man, known to-day,
Duly evolved at last; so far, you say,
The sum and seal of beings progress. Good!
Thus much at least is clearly understood —
Of power does Man possess no particle!
Of knowledge — just so much as shows that still
It ends in ignorance on every side:
But righteousness — ah, men are deified
Thereby, for compensation.”

—BROWNING.



CHAPTER X

THE idea of eternal life has always been associated with that of moral goodness. Evil and death are the antitheses. Righteousness and long life: sin and disintegration, — this is what men have always believed to be in some way a fundamental truth. But it is greatly to be doubted whether they have realized how true it is.

In a very real sense a race or a people or a nation is an individual with a personality of its own. The long history of the past is strewn with the dust of extinct peoples. In a comparatively few instances their rise, climax, decline, and decay lie within the historic period. No doubt these rose from among the ruins of innumerable earlier peoples. Why have some survived while others perished? Why do one or two peoples or families of peoples to-day feel and show the sense of secure being, while others are slowly decaying under our eyes? Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his book upon Social Evolution, has shown with singular

clearness that a people's length of life depends upon its goodness. Not, finally, upon its physical vigor, or its mental advance, but moral goodness. He quotes and indorses Mr. Gladstone's opinion that the physical and intellectual equipment of the average Greek of the time of Pericles was very considerably higher than that of the average Englishman or American of to-day. It is very possible that the Babylonians and Egyptians more than equalled us in these regards. The phallic symbols strewing the ruins by the Euphrates, and the abominations sketched at Pompeii, give the clew to their decay. What prevented the American Indian, in possession since the dawn of time of the most abundant region of the earth, and with his great mental force, from developing a civilization which would have been abiding? What accounts for the decadence of Spain, and for the unburied corpse of China? What explains the ruin of Rome, and Constantinople, and the states of Asia Minor and North Africa? The answer is in every case the same: they perished because they fell short of goodness. No other quality could secure for them continuance in existence. The Teutons have endured, and promise to endure, in virtue of certain racial moral qualities which

they developed ages ago, and which have saved them from being brutalized by their own strength, and from sinking down in their stupidity. Goodness can thus arrest and turn back for nations the primal law of growth, vigor, and decline. Is it, therefore, too much to believe that it may do the same for an individual man? But if anything like this be true, it is clear that our chance of future life turns upon a question of present fact. Does one, or does he not, in any instance possess a moral energy sufficiently strong and coherent to dominate his life? The mere possession of a potential faculty for goodness, or the actual manifestation of a rudimentary ethical sense, will not suffice. Brutes have that much. The races which have perished had that. Only a moral structure developed far enough to take command over the turbulent appetites and errant thoughts will serve the end. Now it is equally clear that some possess this quality, and that some do not. It is a quality of being correlated to some degree, but not very closely, with intellectual forwardness. A simple hind may be very good, and an undevout astronomer may be destitute of moral sense. We have seen above that there are now living whole tribes of undeveloped savages, who have no

more moral energy than the brutes,—for it must be remembered that the brutes have some. To raise, concerning them, the question of immortality would seem to be essentially irrelevant or premature. They have not yet really entered into the human life which now is, to say nothing of that which is to come. As in every other stage of biological advance, an individual here and there, no doubt, rises far above either his fathers or his children, and no doubt such an one wins for himself the power of indefinite progress. The place of escape from out the closed ring of what we call nature is not the body, nor the mind, but the conscience. If that gate be not found, or if it be too narrow for egress, there cannot, in the nature of the case, be any thoroughfare. Nor is it easy to expect immortality for multitudes far closer to us than are the Pygmies or the Bushmen. As one wanders observantly and thoughtfully amongst the crowds which teem in the purlieus of a great Christian city, as he watches their faces, listens to their meagre speech, penetrates to the interiors of their shallow lives, realizes their brutality and mischievousness and cunning intelligence, becomes familiar with their desires and ideals of life, above all, as he sees their look of blank insensibility to any moral

appeal, he is hard put to it not to ask himself, Are these really men? I confess frankly that when I have tried to speak to certain kinds of men "of righteousness and judgment to come," I have felt that the effort was little less vain than would have been the same exhortation to my good dog. One can, it is true, make his appeal to the fear of death, and can thus evoke a response in the form of frantic terror. But one can do the same by pointing his gun at a predatory crow. The fear of death and the belief in a future life are two entirely different things, and have no necessary relation to each other. So far as one can see, the fear of death, as an emotion, does not differ either in kind or degree between the natural man and the natural beast. The natural man's Paradise may be edenic or it may be barren and squalid, but he does not come in sight of the tree of life until he leaves it. Myriads still dwell within it, being even now as the "first man" was. While at that stage, the questions concerning human nature are those which are asked by chemistry, physiology, zoölogy, and comparative anatomy and psychology. Religion simply cannot speak at all to him until he becomes as a god, knowing good and evil. When this stage is reached, and not till then, does

eternal life come within the possibilities. "This is eternal life to know God," and God is apprehended only through the moral sense.

We may admit, without hesitation, that it is not possible to define the point at which the capacity of eternal life is reached in the development of the individual. This does not touch the essential truth. No physicist can draw a line and say, here inorganic matter becomes organic; no botanist can say, here vegetable life becomes animal; no naturalist can say, here the invertebrate ends and the vertebrate begins; no psychologist can say, here instinct ceases and reason commences. No anthropologist can draw a line below man, or through men, or in the life of the individual man, and say, here, now, is conscience. But facts do not cease to be because classification is impracticable. We may rest this phase of the argument at this point, having in its defence all the broad analogies of nature and the unanimous agreement of all the ages. It ought not to be a surprise, and it ought to be a relief, if we find it to be also the teaching of Holy Scripture.

“When once this question of the after-life has been opened, it will be discovered that we and our predecessors have been so walking up and down and running hither and thither among dim notices and indications of the future destiny of men as to have failed to see what lies upon the pages of the Bible, open and free to our use. Those who read the Scriptures unshackled by systems must feel an impatience in waiting—not for the arrival of a new revelation from heaven—but of an unfettered interpretation of that which has so long been in our hands.” — ISAAC TAYLOR.

CHAPTER XI

FOR very many it would be an inestimable relief to have some definite deliverance of Jesus Christ upon the question before us. Are all men immortal, or are only some? Is a universal resurrection a thing which he takes for granted, or is it not? An explicit *dictum* of his upon the subject would be for many of us an end of controversy. But here it comes to us with a sort of shock to be reminded, not only that he does not say, but that he avows, at the time when he spoke upon the general subject, that his information was limited. "Of that day and hour no man knoweth, not even the Son." It is not impossible, however, for us to find out, at least in a general way, what his attitude was. In the first place, we have a sufficiently full report in the Gospels of what he actually said. It is true that the report is incomplete and fragmentary, but it is coherent. Then we have in the other portions of the New Testament the interpretation and expansion of his teaching by very intelligent and sympathetic contempo-

aries. Finally and chiefly, we have the account of his own extraordinary career. This last will constitute a chapter by itself; for the present we shall do better to ask the limited question, What did Jesus, during the period before his own "resurrection," believe and teach concerning the future life? The fact that his language was intelligible to those who heard him is proof that his general presumptions were the same as theirs. But it is a simple matter of fact that he spoke to people who were not believers in the "immortality of the soul." If a previous belief in inherent immortality had been needful to enable them to understand his further teaching in the matter, then he would have been compelled to say so, and thus establish his premises. The point is that he took for his premises the beliefs which his hearers actually entertained. It is at once most necessary and most difficult for us to bring ourselves to realize that his hearers did not have at all the beliefs which are taken for granted now. Some of them did not believe in any future life at all. Some of them believed in a corporate immortality for the people Israel, with which individual continuance had nothing to do. Some of them believed in the resurrection of all individuals of the race of Abraham alone. Some

looked for the immortality of only the righteous of that race. But nobody believed in the immortality of every individual human being as such. It is clear, therefore, that when he faced a company of this sort, if what he was about to teach depended for its validity upon a belief in that which is now common among us, the presumption of universal future life, he would have been obliged to say so. But he did not say so. The beliefs actually existent among his hearers appeared to serve his purpose perfectly well. Moreover, it may be truly said that the assumptions now current would not have served him at all. One of the most difficult things for one to do is to read the true meaning into a word or phrase to which he has long been in the habit of attaching a false or mistaken or secondary meaning. When we find Jesus using such antitheses as "life and death," "eternal life and destruction," "living and perishing," it is at least *prima facie* probable that he used the words in their obvious and natural sense. But we have been so long accustomed to think of eternal *life* as being equivalent to eternal *happiness*, and the converse, that it will require a strenuous and steadfast effort to see in Christ's words what they meant, and what alone they could have meant, to those

who heard them. It is conceivable that the meaning of his words was larger than they realized, but they must have meant that much at any rate, and could not have meant something incompatible with that. Another important thing to bear in mind is that he never deals with abstractions. He has nothing to say about "man," but only about men. He never refers to "the soul," or "the human soul," but always to the soul of some definite individual. He never discusses the question of immortality in the abstract, but only deals with the possibilities and destinies of individuals. He never assumes that man is mortal or that he is immortal, he simply points out to the individual which way life lies, and which way destruction. And what is possibly more important for our purpose than anything else, he explicitly declares that many will be constitutionally incapable of comprehending him at all. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." In other words, he announces that he speaks only to those whose spiritual faculties are sufficiently developed to be able to respond to the stimulus of his truth.

Bearing these preliminary considerations well in mind, we may now ask, What did he say? His teaching may be divided in two portions

which differ greatly in form, if not in contents. The most prominent, but least clear, is that extended address in apocalyptic form suggested by his disciples inquiring concerning the fate of the Capital City, and recorded at length in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, and more briefly by Sts. Mark and Luke. A great difficulty in the way of ascertaining his precise meaning here is found in the fact that the form of the address is evidently not Christ's own. It is framed in that cryptic manner common to the later apocalypses, and derived from the earlier prophetic style.¹ Dr. Gould in his "Theology of the New Testament" well says of it: "Simple as are these teachings, Jesus has been subject to the most singular misunderstandings from the beginning. The last things of which he speaks are not the end of the world, but of the age. . . . Whatever was predicted here by our Lord was to take place within the generation succeeding his death. There is a consensus of scholars about this, the only question being whether he made a mistake or not. And it is strongly against the assumption that he did make a mistake, that he sets forth in the parables a statement of the slow

¹ See Ia. 13 : 9, 10 ; 24 : 21-23 ; Ezek. 32 : 7-10 ; Joel 2 : 10, 30, 31, ; Dan. 7 : 13.

growth of the Kingdom which clearly contradicts the idea of an early coming. Thus, in one sense, the coming of the Son of man occurred at the destruction of the Jewish state, but in another sense it is continually happening, the great crises in the history of the world being really comings of the Son of man." In any case, and whatever it may purport, this last apocalypse of Jesus is so dramatic in form and imagery that not much can be learned from it as to the essential nature and possibilities of the individual man. This must be sought from his more definite teaching.

If one should weave together the words of Christ as they are scattered through the Gospels, he would find that he had before him a treatise upon life and death. He would find the conditions set forth upon which continuance in being is possible, the perils to which being is exposed, the means to counteract those perils, and the ultimate issues of living. But he would find that, throughout, the theme is the individual life. The alternatives dealt with are not future pleasure and future pain, but living or ceasing to live. The Gospels are biological altogether. They speak a language which is more intelligible to-day than it has ever been before. The imagery is drawn almost exclu-

sively from the processes and phenomena of life. The reason is evident: the illustrations are determined by the theme. The question is not of rewards and punishments, but of living or perishing. Whatever of pleasure or pain is implicated at any point is incidental. With this theme to expound, and speaking only to those who had ears to hear, Jesus found himself in sympathy with his auditors. He begins by stating the situation in terms which the zoölogist knows to be true of life at every stage. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Of fifty seeds oft nature brings but one to bear. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have æonian life. He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not pass to catastrophe, but hath passed out of death into life. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised, therefore, when I say unto you that except a man be born from above he

cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." The place of any creature in the scale of being is determined by its procedure. "For every plant is classified by the fruit it bears. Men do not gather figs from the acanthus nor grapes of brambles. A good plant cannot produce bad fruit nor an evil plant good fruit. But every plant which does not bring forth good fruit is cut to pieces and thrown into the fire." The ethical life follows the analogy of the natural life both in origin and method. "For as the Father quickeneth the dead and maketh them living, so the Son quickeneth whom he will. He that hearkeneth to my word, and has confidence in him that sent me, hath æonian life and moves not to destruction, but hath passed out of the dead into the living. I declare unto you that if a man keep my saying he shall never see death. Leave the dead to bury their own dead, and follow after me." He insists that this higher and more enduring life ought to be achieved at any cost. "For what will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his psychical life? Or, what shall a man get in exchange for his own soul? If thy right eye or thy right hand should be in the way, pluck it out, cut it off, for it is better that one of thy members should perish than

that thy whole body should be thrown into the jakes."

These quotations ought to suffice to show his teaching. All the others are variations upon the same theme. His revelation was a revelation of possible life. He has neither threats nor promises. He makes his appeal to the instinct of living. If you do thus, and thus, following in my steps, you can secure for yourself a life so prepotent that what you call death cannot ruin it. Blessed are the meek, the pure in heart, the unselfish in spirit, for the new Kingdom belongs to them. If you devote your energies to building up your lower life, you will lose everything, because it comes to an end, but if you disregard it in the interest of my eternal gospel of goodness, you will find an æonian life. What is all this but the annunciation of the last term in the long series of organic evolution? And is it not supremely trustworthy as being the dictum of the final personality who came himself only "in the fullness of time"?

Now, no doubt, the question will arise, If this be actually the teaching of Jesus, how comes it that it has been so long and persistently misconceived? If the teaching of Christ was biological, how has it come to be thought of as

theological? If his distinction was between a perishable and an abiding life under conditions now existing, why has it been interpreted to refer to the difference between happiness and agony in a future life to which all men are destined in any case? It may be replied that, at any rate, he was not misunderstood by his apostles and first interpreters.

“The most common of those feelings which present obstacles to the pursuit or propagation of truth are Aversion to doubt; Desire of a supposed safe medium; The love of system; The dread of the character of inconsistency; The dread of innovation; Undue deference to human authority; The fear of criticism; Regard to seeming consistency.”

— WHATELY, on Bacon's “Essays.”

CHAPTER XII

THE earliest extant literature of Christianity was written somewhere between twenty and forty years after the death of Christ. In no case can the date of any of these documents be more than approximately fixed. Nor are any of them reasoned and formulated statements of belief. They consist chiefly of certain letters which have remained out of the correspondence carried on by some of his friends when circumstances had carried them to a distance from each other. This correspondence was often of a personal and intimate nature, and sometimes in the form of letters written by some prominent man to a small group of Christians, with the understanding that after being read they were to be passed on to other groups. In such composition we cannot expect to find any very definite and precise statements of belief. The earliest literature bears much the same relation to Christianity as does the familiar correspondence of Huxley and Darwin and Gray to the doctrine of Evolution. To attempt to reconstruct

a systematic religion or scientific creed from such material is not easy. But here, as always, it is not so much what a man says as what he takes for granted, that enables one to see his real position. The earliest books of the New Testament are the following, and were written, approximately, in the order named. The Epistles of James, 1 Peter, 1 John, 1 and 2 Thesalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, the Gospel of St. Mark, and portions of St. Matthew. It may fairly be assumed that all these were written within forty years after the death of Christ. Now, the question is, do they or do they not take for granted the indestructibility of the soul and the natural immortality of all men? Of the answer there can be no doubt; they do not. Moreover, such an assumption makes their arguments in many cases unintelligible, and in not a few makes them worthless. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that, though the writers had become Christians, they had not yet worked free from the mass of confused and contradictory notions about the future life among which they had been reared as Jews and pagans. Of course there is not space here to make a detailed examination and collation of the whole New Testament. That would demand a treatise by

itself, and would be well worth the doing, provided one could be found to do it who possessed the requisite knowledge and was able at the same time to divest himself of all prejudgments, being content to find out just what the writers do say, and not concerning himself to reconcile them to any doctrine or to each other.

In general, it may be said, without hesitation, that the New Testament continues the same biological theme about which the teaching of Jesus revolved. As a rule, however, their arguments do not start, as his do, from the facts of being, but from the fact of his resurrection. The significant thing is that their assumptions are the same as his. Says St. James, "Blessed is the man who survives the moral test, for the issue is life. The lust of the carnal nature begets sin, and sin, when it is full grown, endeth in death. For God has made of us" (who have endured the test) "a kind of first fruits of his living things. Whoso lifteth up an evil one into the plane of living saveth a soul out of death." St. Peter exhorts his fellows to "thank God for his great mercy in having re-begotten us into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, into an inheritance incapable of decay or fading, stored up in the heavens for you who are preserved by the power of God for a salvation

already made and which will be manifest at the last." "They that walk after the flesh, as being without reason, and born brute beasts, shall in their corruption be surely destroyed." St. John indorses this, declaring that "all that is in the kosmos, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, is the empty shadow of life, is kosmic, and the kosmos is perishable, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. He that loveth not abideth among the dead, for whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and you know that a murderer hath no life in him." Neither Sts. Peter, James, or John intimate anywhere in their letters that they have the remotest expectation of continued existence for any except those who fulfil the condition which is the burden of their message. They expect future life solely for those who are, in their phrase, "in Christ," "have passed from dead into living," "have been born again," who have been made "new creatures." They assume throughout that this kind of man has, through his affections and his conscience, reached to a stage of psychical being which differentiates him from the "natural" man. They expect immortality for him, not because he is a "man," but because he has become something more. "They are of the kosmos: we are of God." "They are ani-

imals, not having the spirit: we look, in the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, for æonian life." Whether their contention be valid or not, it is surely plain enough.

The earliest letters of St. Paul are those two written to the little group of converts which he had made a few years previously in Thessalonica. By the time when he began to write, the belief appears to have gained general currency among the Christians, that Christ's plan was to reappear while his friends still lived, gather them out of the world, and then make an end of all things, to rebuild the kosmos and open a new régime. They believed the fact of his own resurrection, but they had not come to see the place of that fact in the economy of life's progress. This belief colors all the earlier New Testament writings. It was a naïve error which only death and the passing of the years could cure. They believed that they had come into possession of a life of such quality that it would endure, but they saw at the same time that they were growing old physically. Presently the great missionary learned that his Thessalonian converts, whose expectations were the same as his own, were in distress and perplexity because some of their number who, with them, had been waiting the Lord's

coming, had fallen asleep. Had they, in consequence, missed the immortality which they expected? St. Paul thereupon writes to reassure them. What he says and what he does not say are equally noteworthy. He has nothing to say to them about a universal resurrection and immortality. He writes: "I would not have you to be even agnostic concerning them that have fallen asleep, or that you should sorrow as do other people who have no hope for the dead. For as we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also we believe that God will bring back with him them that have fallen asleep in him. I assure you in God's truth, that we who will be alive at the Lord's coming, will not have any advantage over them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord shall descend from heaven, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and first the dead in Christ shall rise; and then we that are alive, together with them, shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." He was still of the same opinion when he wrote the Thessalonians his second letter; but as the years went on, and the real teaching of his Master came to be better comprehended, he came to think of the new life less and less

in connection with some great kosmic cataclysm, and more and more as the manifestation of a supreme vital force which would continue to operate according to its own laws to the end of the ages. The divine classic is that fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, which has for twenty centuries been read by Christian charity over the dead bodies of saints and sinners alike. It is a marvellous construction of science, poetry, faith, and reason and high aspiration. But it concerns itself solely with the "dead in Christ," that is with those whose spiritual natures are akin to his. The "natural" man is left outside its conclusions by express terms. If any one question this, let him read it, but let him read it all. When he has read that "as in 'Adam' all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive," let him read on, "but each in his own order; Christ the first fruits, then they that are Christ's at his appearing; and that is the end." The drama is closed and the stage finally cleared before the "natural" man has any place upon it. "That which is natural comes first, then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthen: the second man is of heaven. As is the earthen, such are they also that are earthen; and as is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly.

As we have borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly. For I declare this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: neither doth the corruptible inherit incorruption."

I am painfully aware that all this will seem to some to be an unwarranted attempt to read into St. Paul's words a meaning which they will not bear. I can only urge in reply, that this seems to me to be the natural and obvious meaning, and the only meaning which those to whom the letter was addressed could have found in them. And this conviction is established by the fact that this meaning squares with the fundamental biological purpose of the Gospel of Christ. The quintessence of the matter is that life in its supreme phase conforms to the law of life at all its stages. It is a thing to be achieved. At every step there are a thousand candidates who fail for one who attains. Those who attain remain in possession while they fulfil the conditions of the order where they are. Except a molecule of matter be born from above it cannot enter into life. Except the living animal be born from above it cannot become man. Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. That is not first which is spiritual,

but that which is natural, and afterward, that which is spiritual.

The later books of the New Testament, such as the Revelation of St. John and the apocalyptic portion of St. Matthew's Gospel, throw little or no light upon the question before us. While it is true that they concern themselves with the "last things," it is equally true that they write in a manner which was not intended to be taken for the face of it. The Apocalypse is obscure because it was meant to be obscure. The writers put in cryptogram things which it was not safe for the Christians to discuss openly. No doubt it was generally intelligible to those to whom it was addressed, but the key has long been lost. It is probable that the imagery of the Book of Revelation, colored by the gorgeous but fine frenzied imaginations of Dante and Milton, have done more than anything else to shape and fix the popular ideas concerning resurrection and the other life. The misfortune is that poetry has been taken to be revelation and imagery for reality. But however firmly these Oriental pictures may be fixed in the popular mind, their reality has never been accepted as part of the Christian faith. The creed is content with declaring that we "believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the

life of the world to come." No public creed earlier than the middle of the fourth century contains the clause, "the resurrection of the body." The dramatic framework in which this process is set in apocalyptic scripture may be helpful or may be confusing just in proportion as one is or is not able to discriminate between the truth and the imagery. No end of error has been caused by confusing the one with the other. From this has come that series of mental pictures of universal death; an underworld wherein all souls as phantoms wait through the ages; an universal resurrection; a spectacular judgment; a procession of redeemed to Elysium and of condemned to Tartarus. Unless one's thought can escape out of this Doré gallery altogether, it will seek in vain for a reasonable as well as a religious and holy hope of life beyond.

“One Almighty is, from where
All things proceed, and up to Him return,
If not depraved from good; created all
Such to perfection; one first matter all
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and in things that live, of life,
But more refined, more spirituous and pure,
As nearer to Him placed, or nearer tending,
Each in their several active spheres assigned,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportioned to each kind.”

— MILTON.

CHAPTER XIII

WE have maintained that an enduring life for the individual, if attained at all, must be reached through his highest quality. The latest to be developed and the one which dominates all below it when it does appear is the ethical faculty. It is the universal agreement that where there is no conscience there is no soul. Its evolution has been slow. Between the point where moral sensibility shows its rudimentary form in the beast to the point where it is regnant in the highest type of man, æons lie. Until it is developed there is no avenue leading out from the closed ring of nature. The gateway to the celestial land is conscience. Whenever, and not until, an individual reaches the point to "know good and evil," he becomes potentially immortal. But this faculty is a very different thing from the intellectual capacity to discern that certain actions are allowed and certain others forbidden by extraneous regulations. This latter the savage has, and so has my dog. The ethical faculty does not function until it is able to

respond to ethical stimulation. It must discern the moral quality of action quite independent of prescription. It must be able not only to say, but to feel, "I ought: I ought not." When this stage is reached the possibility begins of some kind of relation with "the Eternal Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness." At this point the individual men, knowing good and evil, begin to be as gods, and to take on the image and likeness of God. If any abiding relation with God be possible, it must clearly be through some expansion or metamorphosis of this final element in human nature. This was the "Way" of Jesus. He committed himself unreservedly to the good. This was his meat and his drink, to do the will of his Father. He does not hesitate to say that if he is not found doing the work of God he is not worthy of credence. Through this nexus he identifies himself completely with God. His very consciousness becomes merged with the divine consciousness. He loses his sense of human individuality. "I am in my Father and my Father in me,"—then he knows his immortality. He is able to lay down his life and to take it up. Destroy this temple of my body if you will, I am able to build it up again. In a word, he effects his escape from the mortality which belongs to men,

through the gate of goodness. Then he turns to his hearers and bids them do the same. He makes no attempt to disguise or minimize the cost to those who determine to follow after him. Indeed, he assures them plainly that except a man deny himself and take up his own cross and follow after him he cannot be his disciple. But he affirms that that way, and that way only, life lies. The other way ends, not in penalty, but in disintegration. In this he concurs in and gives divine sanction to the belief of Genesis, of St. Paul, and of all the ages. Immortality is correlated with goodness. St. Paul after a long and painful life of self-sacrificing devotion is content to say for himself, that he neither knows nor cares for anything else but that he may understand Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and to imitate his sufferings, if need be even to death, in order that he might by any means attain to the resurrection from the dead. His fundamental conviction is that escape from the closed circle of natural life is only possible "through Christ."

At this point we come to face a very obstinate difficulty. In the continent of human life Christianity occupies but an insignificant space. It covers but two score out of the thousands of centuries of human progression. Those who

ever did or could have heard of our Master are but an infinitesimal fraction of the sum total of that mighty host of human beings who have appeared upon and passed off this world's stage. A means of attaining immortality, therefore, which would only be valid after a certain date A.U.C., and within a certain geographical area, could be only a mockery. It would be like a zoölogy whose laws would hold only within a thiergarten and be inapplicable to the beasts of the field. It would be but little to call such a doctrine unscientific, when we might justly characterize it as profoundly immoral. We are in search of a bridge by which it may be possible for individuals to pass from this present life to another. Common equity requires that the hither end of the bridge should be placed within reach of the first man who could walk and wished to cross. We cannot worthily imagine that the great Architect should have either postponed its construction until countless generations had perished on this side the flood, or that he should have placed it in such a position as to be available only to an elect few. Let the conditions of eternal life be as inexorable as they may prove to be. We are familiar with that necessity at every step of the organic movement. No one will gainsay a rigid selection of the individuals

who live out of the multitude who perish. We can see the reasonableness of this, and to some degree, at any rate, the beneficence of it. But the one thing which the moral sense demands is that this selection shall be a *natural* and not an arbitrary one. Time was when devout men denounced the phrase "natural selection" because they fancied it circumscribed the action of God's intelligence. They had not then realized the unspeakable relief it brought to the belief in God's righteousness. Even the gift of eternal life might scarcely be accepted at God's hands if it came tainted with favoritism. "Whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive," may serve as the conception of God's character current at the court of Belshazzar, but the moral sense of to-day can only so conceive of Baal.

But are we not bound to hold that "there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby they may be saved but the name of the anointed Jesus"? I think so; but I think this fact has wide implications which are seldom realized. If eternal life be in any actual way organically correlated with the Divine Man whom we adore, it must be in some way which is superior to times and dates and missionaries. The great apostle could only be restrained for

a passing moment within the meagre syllogism that men could not call on him on whom they had not believed, and that they could not believe on him on whom they had not heard, and that they could not hear without a preacher. "But, I say," he bursts out, "have they not heard? Yes, verily, the sound went into all the earth and the words into the ends of the kosmos." If the Christ be the Son of man to any effectual purpose, it can only be because he is some force which is available under the same conditions to all men at all times. The Life of the World must be able and ready to flow at any time or place where a psychical organism is ready to receive it. The theological schemes of "atonement" give us little or no help toward resolving the difficulty. They are hopelessly artificial and unreal. They all attempt to state the function of the Christ in terms of Hebrew Sacrifice and Roman Law. One could as well construct a zoölogy in the same terms. Christian thought has been bewildered and Christian instinct well-nigh defeated by the centuries of logically coherent but empty systems of doctrine concerning the work of Christ. His terms are biological; theirs are legal. It may be ages yet before we recover from the misfortune of having had the truth

of Christ interpreted and fixed by jurists and logicians instead of by naturalists and men of science. It is much as though the rationale of the circulation of the blood had been wrought out by Sir Matthew Hale, or the germ theory of disease interpreted by Blackstone, or the doctrine of evolution formulated by a legislative council. The Christ is intimately and vitally concerned with the eternal life of men, but the question involved is of their living or perishing, and not of a system of judicial rewards and penalties. When Professor Drummond published his "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," it was the title rather than the argument which gave it its vogue. Before and since that time multitudes of men have been attempting to give utterance to the same conception. Religious thought is striving to escape from the dreary fortress of law to the open world of nature. I venture to think that Darwin and the martyrs of natural science have done more to make the word of Christ intelligible than have Augustine and the theologians. It is little less than marvellous, the way in which the words of Jesus fit in with the forms of thought which are to-day current. They are life, generation, survival of the fit, perishing of the unfit, tree and fruit,

multiplication by cell growth as yeast, operation by chemical contact as salt, dying of the lonely seed to produce much fruit, imposition of a higher form of life upon a lower by being born from above, grafting a new scion upon a wild stock, the phenomena of plant growth from the seed through the blade, the ear, and the matured grain, and, finally, the attainment of an individual life which has an eternal quality. The claim made for the Son of Man is that he has to do with this vital process in a vital fashion from the beginning of the ages to the end of them. This claim may or may not be more difficult for thoughtful men to admit than the claim that he wrought out a means of legal escape for some men from a judicial sentence. But whatever difficulty does attach to it is an intellectual and not an ethical one. It may be incredible, but it is not immoral. No one will deny that the wages of lawlessness is death, whatever he may think about eternal life being the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are now in a position where we may profitably glance at the arguments for "Conditional Immortality" which have been at previous times proposed. The belief has always been more or less prevalent within Christen-

dom. As we have already seen, it was held by most of the early Fathers, though in a very confused and contradictory fashion. After the triumph of Augustine's legal system of theology, it practically disappeared. But the differences among men, both as to their moral opportunities and their moral natures, is always so palpable that the Christian mind could not remain satisfied with Augustine's mechanical notions of an universal resurrection and a hard and fast division of all men between an eternal heaven and an eternal hell. Out of this revolt grew the highly elaborate, but equally artificial, device of Purgatory. This device remained satisfactory until the authority of the Church, upon which it depended, broke down in the sixteenth century. Then the old question emerged again. Do the "wicked" live eternally? And is there no remede for their woe? On the assumption that every human being is immortal in virtue of his manhood, there seemed to be no escape from a conclusion so dreadful that no man can contemplate it for the bulk of his fellows and still find life tolerable. Judged by any moral standard, the proportion of the "wicked" to the "righteous" is, and always has been, overwhelming. If they are so constituted by nature that the poor boon of extinction is forever

impossible for them, what can be thought of a Creator who wantonly fashions such Frankenstein monsters? Some relief for the imagination and the moral sense must be had at any cost. Some have pleased themselves with fancying an universal "restoration" wherein the multitudinous "wicked," having learned goodness through the experience of æonian suffering, shall win their way to blessedness. But this consolatory belief can only be held at the expense of confusion of thought. When it is once steadfastly held up before the understanding, it breaks up by its essential incoherence. The only alternatives which will bear the test which reason and conscience must apply are either (1) that "death ends all" for every individual; or (2) that immortality is a possibility for those individuals to whom it would be a boon. There is much reason to believe that the first alternative is becoming more and more widely accepted, because the second has been so generally forgotten. One wonders at first why the doctrine of conditional immortality has been so little operative, seeing that it has had such powerful advocates. When we remember that throughout the New Testament the hope of resurrection is invariably based upon a belief in the individual having been

previously "united to Christ," and that no other way of "attaining to the resurrection from the dead" is intimated, it is strange that the advocacy of this doctrine in modern times has been so generally brushed aside as a vagary. In the appeal to Scripture it is sustained, and the decision is concurred in by the logic of the case. It has been maintained by some of the most learned and able men of modern times. Dodwell and Priestley and Whately and Hampden and Rothe and Edward White, together with Spinoza and Goethe and Lotze, surely cannot be dismissed as fantastic or whimsical. And yet it must be acknowledged that their arguments have failed to produce any deep or wide impression. The drift appears to be steadily toward a denial of future life to all men as the only practicable means of relief from the intolerable burden which the acceptance of an eternal heaven and hell lays upon the imagination and the emotion of sympathy. There must be some reason for this. Either the advocates of conditional immortality have introduced some element which renders it impossible, or they have left out some element which is needful, or they have built upon a wrong foundation. I think they have done all three.

Their fundamental error is one which has been already dwelt upon. In all their philosophizing they have dealt with "man" instead of with men. They have assumed that the zoölogical classification which sets "Man" in a group by himself for physical reasons is a valid classification for psychical purposes. They have taken for granted that the question of eternal life is the same question for all individuals, and that every individual stands before it in the same position, because he is a "man" in this sense and for this purpose. The real state of the case is, the question only concerns those who have reached the stage of development where it begins to have a meaning. Before the inquiry concerning the future life of an individual can have any cogency, there is a previous question,—Is he living now? This is the point at which the supreme biological classification must be attempted.

In the second place, because they have assumed that all human beings, as human beings, are in like situation as candidates for immortality, they have been compelled to announce conditions of success which are clearly inapplicable and artificial. Some of the Fathers expect eternal life only for those who have

been baptized; others only for those who have received the "body and blood of Christ" in the holy sacrament. At a later date some make it to depend upon an intelligent acceptance of the historical Christ and an act of faith in him. The learned non-juror, Dr. Dodwell, with a frank logic which one can but admire, writes a treatise to prove "from the Scriptures and the first Fathers that the soul is a principle naturally mortal, but immortalized actually by its union with the divine baptismal Spirit. Wherein it is established that since the Apostles none have the power of giving the divine immortalizing Spirit but only the Bishops!" The philosophers have made eternal life to depend upon intellectual advance. Now, these conditions named are so artificial, arbitrary, meagre, so impossible of application for the great multitudes of humanity, so insignificant in comparison of the infinite issue involved, that it is little wonder their exhibition secures but scant attention. What is desired and will be thankfully received is a law of eternal life which will exhibit that majestic sweep of movement, that same naturalness and moral equity, which nature shows, and which will be free from all charge of favoritism as nature is. This law would seem to be clear enough if we

frankly recognize the facts of life. Immortality is a moral achievement, possible where goodness is, impossible where goodness is not.

But, if this be so, is it not by that fact loosened from all dependence upon the work of Christ? The answer is, that depends upon what you mean by Christ. If the Christ be figured only as a personage in human history, and his work as occupying a certain place and date in space and time, then the objection would be fatal. Then neither Abraham nor Moses, Job nor Guatama, would owe their life to him. But he did not define himself so meagrely. He was in the beginning with God, he was Wisdom in all ages; he was crucified in God before the world was. A believer in the divinity of Christ must not shrink from the implications of his belief. Divinity is not to be brought within the categories of duration and extension. The eternal spirit of life is not functionless until set in play in an upper chamber in Jerusalem A.D. 33. It is not essential that the work done by the Christ should be confined to those who know him by his Judean name of Jesus. We believe his own teaching to be that the humane element in God is eternal. The phrases used in the New Testament may therefore be regarded as only

new names for an old thing. Being "united to Christ," being "born from above," the "life hid with Christ in God," and such like, are but the Christian terminology for phenomena which show themselves before and outside of the Christian Era. But they are moral phenomena with which Christ claims a vital connection, even though they be called by very different names from the ones which his disciples use. His contention is that eternal life is attained through goodness; and that wherever goodness is, he is.

“Sleep’st thou indeed? or is Thy spirit fled
At large among the dead?
Whether in Eden’s bowers Thy welcome voice
Wake Abraham to rejoice,
Or in some drearier scene Thine eye controls
The thronging band of souls;
That, as Thy blood won earth, Thine agony
Might set the shadowy realm from sin and sorrow
free?”

— KEBLE.

CHAPTER XIV

BIRDS which are bred in subarctic regions must perish unless they become able, at the proper time, to cross land and sea to a summer clime. Whether any one of them shall be able to do this, depends upon its growth of wing, its instinct of direction, and its strength to sustain its flight. Between the one who can and the one who cannot is a difference of a few millimeters' length of pinion and a few grains, more or less, of nourishment. The transit for the individual man from this stage of being to the one which lies beyond we believe to be a question of the vigor of moral personality. Is there any reason to believe that the passage has ever been effected? A single instance would be worth volumes of argument. It would bring the whole matter out of the abstract into the concrete. Moreover, it would transform the whole lives of all those to whom such information might come. If we could find one single case of a man having passed through corporal death, and having thereafter shown

to living man by word or sight or speech that he is the same personality who died, it would revolutionize human life. Above all, if he should give an intelligible account, not of where he has gone to, but of how he got there, the riddle of the universe would be read. It would be as though some one had found a practicable ford across an encompassing river which had always been thought unfordable. It would change the whole temper and manner of life of those who live this side. It would bring hope concerning the fate of that multitude who had essayed the same crossing, and had seemed to have been drowned.

There are now living several hundred millions of people who believe such a crossing to have been made in one celebrated case. They believe that it occurred two thousand years ago, sometime between a Friday evening and a Sunday morning, in the City of Jerusalem, and that the man's name was Jesus. I understand quite well how the scientist and the student of evidences may feel at this suggestion, like turning away with impatience. The event is so remote, the evidence is so scanty, the assertion is so incredible, that busy men cannot be expected to take it seriously. Maybe so. It is more than likely that a very moderate

cross-examination would break down every witness, and would show contradictions in the testimony. But still the fact remains that hundreds of millions of people have believed and do believe it to be a real occurrence. These also are people whose average intelligence is, upon the whole, higher than that of any equal number of people in the world. No like number of people approach them in moral earnestness or in general truthfulness. This much at least may be said of Christians. If it be objected that their belief in the alleged reappearance of Jesus after his death is only an article of faith which they receive after they have on other grounds become Christians, then the question arises, What accounts for Christianity? The world in Christ's time did not look for a future life of the individual; to-day it looks for it even more universally than the facts warrant. What has caused the change of belief? The cause is so evident that no student of history, so far as I am aware, questions it. It is due to the assured conviction of the friends of Jesus that they saw and talked with him, in his own person, after his death. No one now doubts the sincerity of their conviction. It is conceivable that they were mistaken. But in that case we have that stupendous fabric which

we call Christianity, that complex structure of morals, social order, political energy, and religious power, resting upon nothing. Now there is such a thing as a credulity of scepticism as well as a credulity of belief. The sensible man tries to avoid them both, to look at things as they really are, and in any case to accept the explanation which best explains. Of course, if one take the position that the reappearance of Jesus after his death is an impossibility, and that no kind nor amount of evidence would convince him, there is nothing to be said except that he is a dogmatist to whom science cannot speak. Let it be well understood right here that the question involved is not of the "supernatural" as opposed to the "natural." If Jesus survived his own death, it was because it was natural for him and such as him to do so. The antithesis of natural and supernatural is a mere imagination. The only true classification is the real and the unreal. Whatever is real is natural, for whenever its reality is established the definition of nature must be extended to include it.

Assuming the story of the Gospels to be honest,—and I do not know of any scholar who now questions its honesty,—it is clear that between five hundred and a thousand of

Jesus' friends who knew him in life believed that they had seen him again after his death. It must be acknowledged that the accounts are confused and in some details contradictory, but in essentials they are clear enough. The disciples were not looking for his reappearance, and were very slow to believe it when it occurred. After his execution they gave up all expectation of seeing fulfilled the programme of a kingdom which they had given adhesion to. It is clear alike that they were grievously disappointed, and that they believed their disappointment to be irremediable. They gave it all up and proposed to go about their business. They thought this had been he who should have redeemed Israel, but he had died and their dream was at an end. If they had fabricated the story they would have excused their incredulity by pleading that they had misunderstood his intentions. On the contrary, they blame themselves for not having at once recognized that this was part of his programme. *Something happened*, suddenly, which changed the whole situation for them, and in consequence changed their whole lives. What was it which did happen? The vulgar answer is, — the dead body of Jesus came to life again, and their senses convinced them of the fact. But this

is not the impression, or at any rate is by no means the whole impression, which the story produces when it is candidly examined. It is very curious that in every case the person to whom Jesus reappeared failed at first to recognize him. The two Marys say that when they came to the sepulchre early Sunday morning to prepare the body for burial they found it gone, and they saw either one or two luminous apparitions of some sort,—their accounts do not agree,—who in some way conveyed to them the impression that they must go at once and tell John and Peter, the two most intimate friends of the dead man. They say that they were frightened beyond measure, and bewildered. It would seem that one of them hurried into town to tell what she had seen, while the other, Mary Magdalene, waited hesitatingly to see what farther might befall. While she thus stood, Jesus in some form appeared. She had known him intimately, and had seen him three days before; but when she saw him now she failed to recognize him, “supposing him to be the gardener.” When he spoke, something about him recalled to her his identity; but when she would have verified her sight and hearing by touching him, he forbade her. When the other Mary told her story to the disciples in

the city, they refused absolutely to believe her. At the same time two of them went back with her to see what had happened, but before they reached the garden Jesus met them, spoke to them in his own peculiar way, and made a rendezvous with them later in another province. The next day, while two of them were on their way to the rendezvous, and were talking as they walked, they suddenly found a stranger walking beside them. He joined in their conversation, stayed with them all afternoon, went with them to their inn, sat down at supper with them; but when it came to the actual eating he vanished, and as he vanished they recognized him. The following Sunday night, while a number of his friends were together in an upper room in the city, with the doors carefully barred for fear of being arrested as conspirators, he suddenly appeared among them and asked for food, which he took and ate, and vanished. A week later he did the same thing under the same circumstances; and finding there a friend who had not been present the previous Sunday, and had expressed absolute incredulity, he asked him to touch him and convince himself that it was really he, and vanished. Up to this point they do not seem to have been able to make

anything coherent out of his reappearances. They were rejoiced at this proof of his continued existence, but they did not connect it in any practical way with the plans which had been broken off by his execution. They clearly believed that he had reappeared, but his appearance had no meaning or purpose for them. They gradually separated, and those of them who did not live in the city went back to their homes and resumed their several occupations. Some weeks later half a dozen of them were out in boats fishing in a lake more than fifty miles away. When they rowed ashore they saw a man standing by a fire of coals on the beach, upon which fire he bade them broil some of their fish and break their fast. Once again they failed to recognize him until he had spoken. But this time he took up again the discussion of his plans concerning the gospel of life, gave his disciples their final instructions, and outlined their policy, charging them to reassemble at the capital and wait further developments. Even yet they were perplexed, for "when they saw him they worshipped, but some were sceptical." They obeyed his instructions, however, laid down their business, and returned to the city. There, six weeks after his execution, he appeared in their midst

for the last time, and after a few affectionate words, he disappeared in a luminous cloud, and they never saw him again.

Now, assuming, as we must, that the story is an honest one, it is a very strange one. If it were told of any ordinary man, we could only look at it a little for its curiosity and then dismiss it. Two considerations, however, preclude us from dealing with it after this rough and ready fashion. The first is, that it is related to the previous life of a personality which is altogether remarkable. The second is that it has wrought such momentous results in the course of human history. Wherever the story has gone it has transformed human life. This story is the essential element of the Christian Gospel. Its early apostles and evangelists preached in set terms the "Gospel of the Resurrection." Their burden was not atonement or redemption or heaven and hell, as is commonly assumed, but the announcement of a possible immortality. This is what gained them a hearing. It was "good news," because first of all it was news. We are in the habit of assuming, mistakenly, that the goodness of the news was to be found in the fact that a way had been opened whereby all men, who must necessarily live forever in any case, might live

blissfully instead of painfully. But this, in point of fact, was not the case. Men who could comprehend the good news welcomed it with the same kind of eagerness as would a man to-day to whom a plan should be unfolded whereby he could certainly add fifty, a hundred, a thousand, years to his natural life. This was the preaching of the apostles, that in the person of Jesus "immortality was brought to light." St. Paul says plainly that if his Gospel should break down at this point it would be worthless. Even though Jesus might have lived and taught and suffered, "if he be not risen then your faith is but emptiness." Their argument was that the man Jesus had definitely realized the process whereby a natural human being might attain to the possession of a psychical life so exalted in quality and so tenacious in substance that corporal death could not break it down; that he had achieved it for himself at an incalculable cost; that he had passed through death and conquered it, having "shown himself alive by many infallible proofs"; and that in this he had become a kind of first fruits of a human harvest which might be great or small as the event should prove. It is probably quite impossible for us to realize with what enthusiasm this mes-

sage was received by, or how overwhelmingly it took possession of, the minds and imaginations of men who before had no expectation of a future life of any kind. The primitive appeal of the Gospel was to the supreme aspiration of all organized creatures, the "lust of living!" It offered extended existence to those who had looked for destruction. This appeal is incalculably more potent than the one now commonly addressed to the desire for happiness or the fear of misery. It explains at once the eager welcome given the Gospel in the early ages and the languid acceptance accorded it now. It was literally a proffered alternative of life and death. No wonder Paul accounted all things "but dung that he might know Christ and the power of his resurrection and attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And little wonder that men to-day who have fallen into the way of thinking that they are immortal anyway, will snatch at the pleasures of the life which now is, and trust to good fortune to escape any very intolerable misery in that to come. Upon this attitude it is hard to see how the gospel of deliverance from penalty can make much impression. To obey it involves cost, lays on a cross. To disregard it opens the door to present pleasure. The

allurement of a present pleasure is usually a more potent stimulus than the apprehension of a remote pain. But if it be true that the stake at issue is not either the pleasure or the pain of life, but the life itself, the situation becomes more tragic. The Gospel contained in the resurrection of Christ is the last term in an evolutionary process which begins with the eternal chaos and reaches its culmination in the man become immortal. The process is as inexorable as it is beneficent. The gift of life is strewn with a lavish hand. But every living creature receives so much as he is able to appropriate, and no more. In this there is no inequity. This is nature's way, and nature's way is God's way. This way is the "Way of Life" from the protoplasmic slime to the Son of Man.

“In considering questions of this sort we ought not to listen for a moment to those frequent, but impertinent, questions that are brought forward with the view of superseding the inquiry; such, for example, as these: ‘What good is answered by the alleged extra-natural occurrences?’ or, ‘Is it worthy of the supreme wisdom to permit them?’ and so forth. The question is one first of *testimony*, to be judged on the established principles of evidence, and then of *physiology*; but neither of theology nor of morals.” — ISAAC TAYLOR.

CHAPTER XV

So far as we can see there is not only no living personality apart from a material organization, but a "disembodied spirit" is unthinkable. This is true so far as human thought is concerned even of God. We cannot formulate the idea of the "absolute God." That conception is no more than an algebraic symbol. In practice we cannot think of God apart from thought of the universe. If we try to do so we are compelled still to keep in mind the universe as the thing outside of which or over against which God is. For the purposes of human thinking, matter is as eternal and as unbounded as God is. This is not to say that it is so "absolutely." We know nothing about "absolute" being. But the practical reason cannot formulate the idea of a God without a universe, or of a soul without a body. If any one fancy he can do so let him make the experiment.

This is why the question of the "resurrection of the body" becomes of such supreme moment. The contribution which Christianity has made

to belief in a future life really does not concern the spirit, but the body. People had for ages before Christ had a notion of some kind of nebulous and phantasmal survival of the spirit, but the belief was at its best practically inoperative. A spirit with no material organ for expressing itself puts to confusion all our ideas as to what a human being is. The body is just as essential a component part of our idea of a man as the soul is. It is as easy to think of the body becoming immortal without a soul as to think of the spirit becoming immortal without a body. We instinctively revolt against either idea once we get it clearly before the mind. This is the reason why the physiologist finds it so difficult to believe in the immortality of the soul. It is only because he sees more clearly than other men do the constant and essential interdependence of soul and body. The ground of his scepticism is sound. There is no known form of energy separate from matter. The soul cannot flit across the river alone. Nor is it any relief to think of it existing even temporarily in a quiescent state while waiting for the body. It cannot wait. An individual life must be continuous or else not be at all. It cannot stop and go on again. The Easter imagery of the egg and the butterfly will not bear scientific ex-

amination. The caterpillar, the imago, and the butterfly are all included in one cycle, to be sure, but the continuity of the individual is broken at each stage of the progression, and the cycle when completed returns upon itself. It goes nowhere. What we are in search of is a continuous life of the individual. To this end St. Paul affirms that there *is* a natural body and there *is* a spiritual body. If so, where is it? How does it grow? What are its qualities? What is its relation to that which we call matter? What reason has the apostle for making his assertion? His reason is perfectly obvious. He asserts that there is a "spiritual" body because he has seen one.

The reports of the reappearance of Jesus may be examined without irreverence because we are so deeply concerned to know the facts and their significance. There is a *naïveté* about the accounts in the Gospels which is very striking, and which is greatly to the advantage of one who seeks for the actual facts. They represent the risen Christ as a living man like other men, and at the same time strangely unlike, and they make no attempt to adjust the contradictions. He is independent of the laws of matter, and at the same time he conforms to some of them. He suddenly appears in a lighted



room when the doors are locked, but at the same time they at least think they see him eat and drink. Again, he communicates with them by some kind of spoken language, but is at the same time invisible. He is walking along the road to Emmaus, and presently is standing on the beach of the Galilean Lake, fifty miles away. They see him and take him for a stranger, but the next moment they recognize him. We seem, in a word, to be in the presence of something which is both material and immaterial, something which is cognizable by the senses, and which at the same time plays fast and loose with sense perceptions. There would seem to be only two reasonable attitudes toward the story open to us. Either we may dismiss it altogether as an Oriental fantasy, or we must extend our definitions of nature so as to include its phenomena. Of course one may, if he will, look at it from a distance as a sacred region into which curiosity dare not enter and where faith alone is admissible. But there is such a thing as sitting down at the entrance of a holy ground under pretence of putting off one's shoes, while the real motive is either indolence or fear. If the phenomena under consideration are facts at all, they are facts which are meant for use. We may rightly "have boldness to enter into

the holiest, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh."

The most remarkable feat which modern science has accomplished has been to establish the existence of that strange substance known as the luminiferous or interstellar *ether*, the medium through which the "X ray" and wireless telegraphy perform their work. Its existence had long been suspected, now it is known. Sir Isaac Newton closes his "Principia" with this prophetic paragraph:—

"And now we might add something concerning a most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies; by the force and action of which spirit the particles of bodies mutually attract one another at near distances and cohere if contiguous; and electric bodies separate, and light is emitted, reflected and heats bodies; and all sensation is excited, and the members of animal bodies move at the command of the will, namely by vibrations of this spirit mutually propagated along the solid filaments of the nerves from the outward organs of sense to the brain, and from the brain to the muscles. But these things cannot be explained in a few words, nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments which is necessary to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this elastic spirit operates."

Now, this "subtle spirit" of Sir Isaac has been shown to be, not spirit at all, but a material medium which fills all space and interpenetrates all that we call matter. The "sufficiency of experiments" which Newton lacked have been made by Struve, Helmholtz, Lord Kelvin, Dolbear, Tesla, Röntgen and a hundred other mathematicians and physicists. The result has been to compel a new definition of matter. Extension, ponderability, form, dimension, and such qualities can no longer be thought sufficient to define matter. "Empty" space can no longer be spoken of, for no portion of space is empty. It can no longer be said that "no two portions of matter can occupy the same space at the same time," for they do so constantly. Indeed, it seems to be a very condition of the existence of the matter which we see that it should lie bathed in a matter which we do not see. For the universal ether is matter. As Lord Kelvin has demonstrated, it shows in some ways the phenomena of a highly tenuous fluid, in others that of an infinitely dense solid, and in still others the properties of a jelly. It is the medium through which light moves by waves of an ascertained length, electric energy by waves of a different length, heat by still a third, and the energy

which we call gravitation by some means not yet ascertained. It has been weighed and measured. A sphere of it the size of the earth would, if compressed to the density of earth, be in size somewhere between a marble and an orange. It is the medium in the opaque flesh through which the invisible rays of light pass to form an X-ray photograph. Its waves flow through so dense a mass of matter as a block of glass, as water flows through a sieve. It is the medium in which the elemental energies of heat, light, electricity, and possibly chemical energy do their work. May not vital energy be concerned with it as well?

I venture to say in parenthesis that it is not easy to understand why the physicists are so reluctant to admit the existence of such an objective fact as "Vital Energy." Surely there are abundant phenomena which cannot be forced to come under any other form of energy known. Suppose the phrase is but a name for a set of phenomena whose essential nature is not understood, that much may also be said of all the other categories of energy.

It is now more than twenty years since two distinguished English men of science, Professors Balfour Stewart and P. G. Tait, put forth hesitatingly a theory of a physical basis of a future

life. Starting from the evident double truth that all psychical activity is associated with molecular activity in the matter of the brain and nerves, while at the same time physical and psychical phenomena are evidently different things, they suggest that there may well be a *tertium quid*, a third something, which serves as the nexus between them, and that Ethereal Matter may be such a thing.

Each thought we think, each emotion we feel, is accompanied by certain molecular movements and rearrangements in the brain. The psychical activity actually builds up a physical fabric for itself. But the material fabric is every moment disintegrating, and at death falls into ruin. Now, suppose that before that ruin befalls, the soul shall have been able to build up, as it were, a brain within the brain, a body within the body, something like that which the Orientals have for ages spoken of as the "Astral Body." Then, when the body of flesh shall crumble away, there would be left a body, material to be sure, but compacted of a kind of matter which behaves quite differently from that which our sense perceptions deal with. It is a material which, so far as science has anything to say, is essentially indestructible. It moves freely amongst and through ordinary

matter without let or hindrance. It is not difficult at any rate to form a picture of a life based upon its organization. From the individual spirits of just men made perfect this present "muddy vesture of decay" has dropped away, leaving them "not unclothed but clothed upon." They are still men. They have rational souls with material bodies fit to sustain and to express their psychical life. The matter of their bodies is obedient to the laws of matter and life, but to the laws of *that kind* of life and matter. "There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial," and each has its own modes of action. Such Ethereal bodies compacted with living souls would of necessity inhabit a universe of their own, even though that universe should occupy the same space that this one does. Neither earth nor fire nor water could in the least impede their movement. In frost and flame they would be equally at home. With the swiftness of light or gravitation they could speed from where old Boötes leads his leash to where Sagittarius draws his bow in the south. With bodies of such fine stuff compounded, and so plastic to the uses of the spirit, their knowledge would expand until nature's secrets should lie open to their eyes. Their senses would be so acute and delicately

balanced as to be capable of thrills of pleasure so transcendent, and of pain so poignant, that the experience of this present life probably gives us no comparison to estimate them by. Love could have its perfect way where there would be perfect comprehension. In this stage no personality ever knows really very much of any other. Each is shut within a body which at the best can only partially reveal it. Each living soul can but make itself known and can gain knowledge of another only through physical media which are limited by the qualities of the matter which compose them. The mind is continually weighed down and retarded by the thousand ills that flesh is heir to. No doubt the Ethereal body is also subject to its own ills. But being in close relation to the psychical life and immeasurably better fitted to be the vehicle for its expression, knowledge and love must have opened to them possibilities, not infinite indeed, but so extended that we may not even try to guess their limits.

All this is based upon two propositions, first, that any possible future life must be an embodied life, and, second, that there is such a material stuff as may serve the uses and needs of such a life. It is an hypothesis. But every advancing step of human knowledge has been

gained by an hypothesis. If the theory be found to bring into coherence facts which are known to be facts, and make them intelligible, and lead to the discovery of other facts till then unknown, it slowly changes from an hypothesis to a conviction. Will this one bear that test?

Let us first see to what extent it fits the language of the New Testament.

“For we know that if the earthen fabric of our tent be dissolved, we have a building from God, a fabric not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For truly in this we groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up in life. We faint not, but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.” “All flesh is not the same flesh, there is one flesh of men, another of beasts, another of birds, so there are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. The first man is of the earth, earthen, the

second man is of heaven. As we have borne the image of the earthen, let us also bear the image of the heavenly." "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain with us until now. And not only so, but we ourselves which have the first fruit of the spirit groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption, that is to say, the setting free of our body." "And Jesus was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, and behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him." "And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them he took bread and blessed it and brake it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened and they knew him and he vanished out of their sight." (Literally, "They gradually ceased to see him.") "As they were looking he was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight. And as they were earnestly gazing after him as he went into the heavens, behold two men in white vesture stood beside them." "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of the body I know not), caught up into paradise, and that he heard things of which it

is not permissible for a man to speak." "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus Christ."

Such quotations might be extended indefinitely, but these are enough to show that the companions and survivors of Jesus looked with confidence for a future life of such sort that their spirits would not be left naked, but clothed upon with some kind of material substance which was even then being woven for them in the secret place of their own being. Whether or not the Ethereal stuff which science now knows does or does not prove to be that which may serve for the physical basis of a continued personal life, it may fairly be said that it fulfils the requisite conditions better than anything else which is known. The late Professor Cope in his "Origin of the Fittest" asks, "Is there any generalized form of matter distributed through the universe then which could sustain consciousness?" And answers, "The presumption is that such a form of matter may well exist."

Mr. John Fiske in criticising this hypothesis has said that "the essential weakness of such a theory as this lies in the fact that it is thoroughly materialistic in character. By it the putting on of immortality is in no wise the

passage from a material to a spiritual state. It is the passage from one kind of a materially conditioned state to another." This, I conceive, is precisely where its strength resides. It turns away from that phantasmal region of "disembodied ghosts," and looks for the hope of continued existence at the top of the hill, but in the line of the same path up which life has been climbing throughout the æons. Our souls shrink from disembodied being with a repugnance which cannot be overcome by any alluring visions. Much as we may yearn for immortality, we would rather miss it than possess it under conditions of which we can form no conception and which terrify by their strangeness. The passage into life at any stage is never terrifying to the new creature being born, whatever pangs it may cost the eternal mother.

Professor Shaler, Dean of the Scientific Faculty of Harvard, in his book upon "The Individual," uses these very remarkable words, "A number of men of no mean authority as naturalists, some of them well trained in experimental science, have, after long and apparently careful inquiry, become convinced that there is evidence of the survival of some minds after death." This is a conclusion which sensible men will reach very hesitatingly. The evi-

dence, if evidence it can be called, is found by an analysis of that enormous but unsavory mass of "Spiritism," "Occultism," "Telepathy," "Hypnotism," and such like. It is a material with which sane men are very reluctant to deal. It is so contaminated by fraud, charlatanry, credulity, and hysterics that one's natural inclination is to pass by it as far on the other side the way as the width of the road will allow. But at the same time it must be confessed that there is a growing willingness to admit that there is "something in it." If the subject of supernormal phenomena be brought into discussion in club or drawing-room, and strange accounts are exchanged of alleged instances, the chances are that seven out of ten present will end by giving their assent to Hamlet's dictum, "There be a thousand things in heaven and earth not dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio." It is not easy to find even an educated man who will categorically deny the assertion that there are instances wherein one human personality communicates with another without physical media of intercourse. At any rate, the belief in the actual occurrence of hypnotic suggestion and telepathic communication has come to be quite general. The proof is very difficult to come at. When one arises

from reading the reports of the "Society of Psychical Research," or the reported experiments of Dr. Charcot or Professor Flournoy, he finds himself in a very exasperating mental state. It is not so much that he has found what appears like a fact here and there scattered through a mass of fraud and self-deception. If that were all, he could reasonably dismiss the whole matter, saying *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*. But that is not all. He has the impression that he is here in the presence of some kind of natural phenomena which are real, but which are being exploited by the wrong people. He is not much better satisfied when he finishes the report of a "Seybert Commission" of lawyers and scientists appointed by a great university to investigate the alleged facts. He feels that here again the question is in the wrong hands. If the one set are too credulous, the other are too dogmatic.

The truth would seem to be that we are beginning to take serious account of a set of unclassified psychic phenomena which correspond very closely with a newly described set of physical phenomena. The unthinking person is prone to regard such things as wireless telegraphy and Röntgen photography as merely inventions or discoveries which are only a little

more wonderful in degree than the hundreds which precede them, but not differing from them in kind. This misapprehends their significance. They are discoveries in an entirely new region. They are doors opened into another universe. It is a material universe, to be sure, and one which we now see to have been about us always. Its existence had long been suspected, but there was no proof, and there did not seem to be any reason or faculty by which proof could be made. It is a universe where the ordinary laws of matter are inoperative, indeed appear to be non-existent, but of its reality no one any longer thinks of doubting. Now, coinciding with these new and strange phenomena of the physical universe, there appear to be equally strange phenomena of the psychical world. Is it too much to believe that the two are in some way correlated? That living mind can and does, under certain unusual conditions, act upon other living minds without the medium of "matter" can hardly be any longer questioned. Whether it be a "departed" spirit touching a living one, or one living one touching another, seems to me of little consequence. The one is antecedently just as credible or as incredible as the other. The conditions of such psychical movement are

not yet known. Whether or not they ever will be, no one can say, but there seems to be on the part of the scientific world a growing disposition to examine them with a better temper than heretofore. Not to speak of Mr. Alfred Wallace, whose dicta in this region can scarcely be taken seriously, such physicists as Crookes, such psychologists as Flournoy and Hyslop and many others equally sane, are addressing themselves to a study of this region in a way from which much may be hoped. So far all indications point to the belief that all such equivocal phenomena have their place in a region which is not really "spiritual" in the sense in which that word is usually used, but in one which is "material," though not in the sense which that word ordinarily connotes. In a word, the last discovery in physics and the last experimentation in psychology seem to be approaching each other.

The way in which all this concerns our theory of the other life ought now to be evident. If that life be one which involves and requires the interaction of spirit and matter, and demands it at a time when the matter which ordinarily serves the spirit for its expression shall not be available, it is much to be even thus tentatively convinced that spirit can function under other conditions than those

which belong to the ordinary life of man. It gives point and direction to ancient and widespread, but vague and unfruitful, hopes and beliefs. As Professor Shaler judiciously says:—

“Notwithstanding this urgent disinclination to meddle with or be muddled by the problems of spiritism, the men of science have a natural interest in the inquiries of the few true observers who are dredging in that dirty sea. Trusting to the evident scientific faithfulness of these hardy explorers, it appears evident that they have brought up from that deep certain facts which, though still shadowed by doubt, indicate the persistence of the individual consciousness after death. It has, moreover, to be confessed that these few as yet imperfect observations are fortified by the fact that through all the ages of his contact with nature man has firmly held to the notion that the world was peopled with disembodied individualities which could appeal to his own intelligence. Such a conviction is itself worth something, though it be little. Supported by any critical evidence it becomes of much value. Thus we may fairly conjecture that we may be on the verge of something like a demonstration that the individual consciousness does survive the death of the body by which it was nurtured.”

“All physical science is only a probability, and, what is more, one which we have no means whatever of measuring. It all rests on the assumption that the course of nature has been, is, and will continue to be, uniform. And yet, no one has ever been able to give any answer at all to the question, What proof have you that the uniformities which you call laws will not cease or alter to-morrow? In regard to this we are like a man rowing one way and looking another, steering his boat by keeping her stern in line with the objects behind him.” — FITZJAMES STEPHEN.

CHAPTER XVI

THE individual man is a complex being of spirit and body. Each of them appears to be essential to the very existence of the other. But the body is under a law which has decreed its destruction at three score and ten or thereabouts. The crucial question then is, When and under what conditions does the spirit begin to establish a nexus with a physical basis of life which may be more abiding? The law of the Conservation of Energy does not avail us here. It may very well be that every unit of vital energy residing in any living form may be transmitted into vital energy in some other form when its body becomes no longer able to maintain it. This is sufficient for the lower forms of life. They only seek to keep their species going. But this does not satisfy us. We want the continuous life of the individual. But it is clear that this life cannot begin until the fact of individuality is clearly present. Now, in what does the essence of personality consist? In the lower animals there is really

no such thing. Each one is but a unit, and the real entity is the herd, the flock, the species, the tree. Where, then, does personality begin? It can begin only at the point where the sense of relationship with other personalities begins. But this is the place where the moral faculty emerges. The conscience is the faculty which feels the sense of obligation to other personalities. It is kept alive by the stimuli which comes from other persons. Its characteristic sensation is sympathy. It lives by going out of itself. Thus by another path we reach the elemental truth that "whoso saveth his life shall lose it, and whoso loseth his life shall find it." No progression in mere intelligence will fill the requirements. An intelligence of such high order that it might *understand* every possible relation of the individual would still be utterly different in kind from a moral sense which can *feel* these relationships. Sensation is the evidence of life. Immortality is always associated with goodness. Until moral sensibility become self-conscious, all question of personal immortality is irrelevant, because there is, accurately speaking, no personality to be immortal. Up to that point the individual living creature, whether in "human" form or not, falls short of that essential personality

for which eternal life can have any meaning. All that lies below is in the material order, or in the kosmic order, and not in the kingdom of persons. In a certain rough and ready fashion we actually deal with individuals on this basis. We do not count as persons those whom we cannot credit with moral discrimination. When that stage is reached, however, in the case of an individual, we may fairly expect that he, in virtue of the fact, will enter upon a new phase of being, and by all the analogies of nature we may expect that his life history from that point onward will show phenomena which appear to have little or nothing in common with what preceded.

In the study of nature, whether organic or inorganic, one of the most amazing things is the way in which every now and then a continuous progress is broken at a "critical point," and is lifted up into an entirely new realm. One of the most familiar instances of these is the behavior of that common substance, water, under the influence of heat. Between 32° and 212° F. it is a ponderable, colorless fluid whose properties are familiar, and whose phenomena are uniform. Suppose that one had never seen it at any temperature higher or lower than these, he would have had no suspicion that it

could or would behave in any other way or show any other properties. But let him abstract its heat slowly down toward the freezing point. Until it reaches 32° it is still the same substance about which he had supposed his knowledge to be complete. Thereupon it is suddenly, and for reasons about which absolutely nothing is known, transmuted into an utterly different thing. The properties which it possessed an instant before are gone, and a new set take their place. Its whole mode of existence is transformed. It has become a new creation. A still more significant "critical point" is the one where inorganic matter passes into protoplasm. It is true that no one has ever, as yet, seen this transformation occur. It is altogether probable, however, that it is occurring incessantly, that as organized matter is continually falling into disintegration at one side of the process it is continually being re-created at the other. The conditions cannot, or at any rate have not, been produced artificially. All indications are that the process has its place in the realm of the infinitely minute, where the microscope cannot penetrate. But the inorganic can be discerned at the last stage before the transmutation, and the organic at the first stage thereafter, and though the

change occurs at a point so fine that it cannot be located, it is still a change which is practically infinite. The same law of movement obtains throughout the whole path of ascending being. A long series of movements appear to have settled down to the determination to repeat themselves *ad infinitum*, when, presto, it starts not only in a new life but on a new plane. If it shall appear, therefore, that the individual who has reached to the stage of self-conscious moral personality has as a consequence come into new relations both to the universe which he inhabits, and to the Supreme Personality of the universe, we need not be surprised. Nor need we be concerned to decide whether the change is "natural" or "supernatural," for all that is natural in its sphere. It accords with the terminology of Scripture and science both to say that "he has become a new creature," that he "has passed from death unto life," that he has "been born again," that "he is no longer subject to the law of sin and death." It is probable, moreover, that the subject of this new birth is usually more or less conscious of the fact. In the Christian vocabulary it is spoken of as "Conversion." The term is vague and the emotion ill defined. But some emotion, which

may be called by this name or some other, seems to be a common experience of all those individuals whose moral sense has awakened to self-consciousness. Even if it be not identified by the subject at the moment of its beginning, it lies in the consciousness as an abiding sense whereby spiritual qualities are discerned. If it be asked, therefore, "Who are they among men who are thus born from above?" the answer is, they are all those who are capable of asking that question. No one can interrogate life unless he be alive. To ask the question shows that the inquirer is living. But it must be actually an inquiry prompted from within, and not an echo from around him; a spontaneous outreaching of the spirit toward being, not merely a curious question put by the intelligence to a spirit indifferent to the reply. Within Christian circles this passage of the individual into a higher plane of being has been traditionally associated with certain objective instrumentalities known as "Sacraments." But while in general this association has been regarded as a reality, there has never been any clear agreement as to its rationale. A vulgar and unintelligent opinion has widely prevailed, to be sure, that the quickening into a more exalted life is actually dependent upon

the exhibition of the sacrament in every instance. But this opinion has never gained for itself the sanction of either creeds or theologians. The most that these have ever affirmed is that there is a constant relation of some sort, not well understood, between the life and the "sacraments where they may be had." In the first and crucial case when an apostle was called upon to express the rationale in action, St. Peter, at the baptism of Cornelius, used this very significant expression, "Can any man forbid water that these who have received the Holy Spirit, even as we, should not be baptized?" The point to be noted is that the apostle recognized that Cornelius and his companions were already "living." He did not think of the sacrament as the instrument to produce the life, but he did think and act as though it had some actual relation to the life. The other sacrament is always dealt with the same way. It is "bread," to nourish a life already existent, it is "wine," to invigorate an energy already present. The elemental concept of the sacramental idea seems to be to emphasize and keep alive the truth that even the most exalted form of spiritual life still has a necessary nexus with matter on the one hand, and that on the other its own essential qualities are moral purity, of

which water is the counterpart in the physical realm, and sympathetic affection which is best expressed by brethren breaking bread with one another. But in no case has the Christian Church ever asserted or believed that the citizenship of the New Kingdom can be populated only by this means.

There is yet an outlying difficulty which I approach with hesitation because I am not able to see a solution which is altogether satisfactory. Throughout this study in spiritual biology we have assumed that the subjects of the classification which we seek are adult men and women. That is to say, they are individuals who have advanced so far toward complete human development that they may fairly be examined for our purpose. But what of the infant, the immature, the undeveloped, whose physical life is broken up? To this it may at least be replied that the marvellous possibilities which are seen to lie in the law of heredity may well contain all that is needed here. When we consider what actually is carried over from parent to child through the microscopic bridge of a single germ cell, we need not despair of heredity doing for the soul as it does for the body. That ethical qualities, when they exist, are transmissible is a common expe-

rience. It would at least be no violation of the analogies of Scripture and nature if the child of one who has achieved life eternal should also prove to be immortal. Where, or how, or under what circumstances its development may take place is the same question, no more and no less difficult, under any theory of a future life. Our theory has in its favor that so far as any answer at all can be given it gives it in terms of processes which we know to be real.

“With increased experience and reason Man perceives the more remote consequences of his actions, and the self-regarding virtues, such as temperance, chastity, etc., which during early ages are utterly disregarded, come to be highly esteemed or held sacred. Ultimately, the moral sense or conscience becomes a highly complex sentiment, originating in the social instincts, largely guided by the approbation of one’s fellow-men, ruled by reason, self-instinct, and in later times by religion.”

—CHARLES DARWIN.

CHAPTER XVII

THE state of being in which men now find themselves is often spoken of as a "life of probation." The phrase is quite misleading, indeed, one might well denounce it as mischievous. The crude notion which it represents is that men are allowed in this life a sort of preliminary course of action, with a public examination at the end of it, upon the result of which will be determined a final and fixed status of eternal existence which shall be without any element of probation. The conception is legal and mechanical, and is one which can have no application to vital processes. It is true that this life is one of probation, but then it is true that the next life must also be so. That is to say, living is always "on probation." The living creature at any stage remains alive so long and only so long as it conforms to the conditions of living. An "unconditioned" life for a finite creature is a contradiction in thought. It matters not at all under what circumstances such a life is thought of as unfold-

ing itself, it must still be under conditions. The life of a tree, a beast, or a man, the life here or yonder, can never be otherwise than upon probation. But the terms of the probation are never artificial but always natural. They cannot be represented by imagery drawn from the procedure of a trial in a court, but only by biological ideas such as "conformity to environment" and "survival of the fit." This law must needs hold wherever and whenever life is. There cannot but be a "future probation," but it is vital and not judicial.

It would be much nearer the reality to say that for the individual this life is a time of *gestation*. This life would seem to bear a relation to the one to come analogous to that which the period of embryonic development bears to this one. The living, individual human form may with truth be regarded as a matrix or womb within which another form may have been quickened and be slowly maturing. Indeed, the analogy is so complete as to be startling. The laws and processes of all life are probably better seen in the study of embryology than anywhere else. There a life is built up within a life. Its foundation is laid in an already existent life. Its material and psychic stuff is derived through an organism

surrounding it, but are not identical with that organism. It is separable from the parent form, and outlasts it. Its future development may immeasurably surpass the one within which it is for the time pent. We therefore think of the "new man" as one who may endure through and after the dissolution of the frame which now is, being compounded of psychical and Ethereal stuff, derived through and builded up within the present individual man. He has been begotten in the secret places of the present individual, and death is not his conception but his new birth.

But we cannot leave the subject here. We have interrogated nature and revelation to find a place where the individual man may, if he achieve so much, cross over from the life that now is to another. We have become satisfied that the passage is possible for those who possess the requisite moral vigor, and that the bridge has in at least one instance been safely passed. We have found reasonable ground to believe that conscious human personality may and does in some way hold commerce with other personalities through channels which are no doubt material, but composed of matter different from that with which the laws of physics generally deal. We have seen that this whole

conception conforms strikingly to the analogies within our present knowledge, and have come to believe that the universe is a more spacious place than had been feared. Admitting it to be true, therefore, that in God's house are many mansions, and that the door by which one passes from his present habitation may swing into another for him who has now the key, one is at liberty to ask, what mode of life may be expected there? Future life, to be personal life at all, must be continuous with that which now is. One must begin again where he leaves off. But this implies the passage into the other life of men at all stages of development, provided only they have been developed far enough in any case to make the transit possible. The law of growth and progress, with the concomitant possibility of degeneration and death, must be carried over with them, and must hold wherever living creatures are. One may not affirm that the next life is an "endless" one for those who attain it, any more than this one is. It has its own laws of being, and the obverse of every law is a penalty, and the ultimate penalty everywhere is destruction.

But under the conditions of the Ethereal life, moral development must needs be both more

certain and more swift than under those of mortal life. The power of moral choice must remain, and to live rightly still demand the strenuous will. It must demand it all the more there, the life being endued with such indefinitely increased capacities. But there can be no breach of personal continuity. Death can only make evident what the actual condition of the individual is. He that was holy is holy still. He that was filthy is filthy still. But there are degrees in moral corruption. It may have been so all pervading in one that physical death only served to break up the body out of which the spirit had long since perished for lack of a suitable home. Or, the new man may pass on carrying with him moral faultiness, real, though not so enwoven with the fabric of his being but that it may be purged and eliminated by the discipline of the new life, which lays on few stripes or many, as the need may be. The Ethereal universe shall still hide secrets which thought will find its joy in discovering. Being a human world, the inhabitants thereof can but live humanely.

“To the lover full function
Of an unexhausted joy ;
To the warrior, crowned ambition
With no envy's base alloy.

“To the ruler, sense of action
Working out his great intent;
To the prophet satisfaction
In the mission he is sent.”

The gross conditions of material existence which in the present stage drag love down to lust and make of the spirit a bonds slave toiling to win bread for the body, shall have been replaced by others so fine and plastic, so responsive to psychic needs, that a progress toward completeness of life is possible and inconceivably swift.

Or, there may be those who, dazzled with the possibilities of the new life, presently begin to sin magnificently, and the natural consequences of violated law there as here shall work their quick destruction, through anguish intolerable, to the complete and awful catastrophe of the second death. And lying at the end of it all, one seems to catch a dim glimpse of that “far-off, divine event toward which the whole creation moves.” To every man who is able to appreciate at all the meaning as well as the mystery of life, God and nature join in the appeal formulated for all time by the Divine Man:—

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to

destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

“Death for the body with life is combined,
Darkness disputes with the light for the mind,
While spirit climbs upward, if good it desires,
Or, chained to the earth by its sin, it expires.
God is our Life, and our Light, and Upraising;
Whom God doth uplift shall never cease praising.”

— FELIX MELANCTHON.

CHAPTER XVIII

A PRACTICAL question still remains to be considered. No moral or religious belief can be adopted or rejected without some regard to the effect which it may naturally be expected to produce upon the conduct of those who entertain it. How will the doctrine of Immortality as distinguished from immortality affect men's moral life? If we say to them, "You are not necessarily immortal, but you may become so if you set about it properly," and if they believe us, will they be the better or the worse for it? Of course the intrinsic truth of the doctrine does not depend upon any such consideration. That must stand or fall on other ground. If it be true, men must adjust themselves to it as best they may. Truth is neither made nor unmade by an estimate of its consequences. But, at the same time, when one is endeavoring to determine whether or not such a proposition be true, he cannot but be influenced, more or less, by his judgment upon its practical result one way or the other.

It is quite commonly taken for granted that a general belief in the necessary immortality of all men, with the proffer of an eternal heaven and the threat of an eternal hell, is essential to the moral order of society. It is unquestionable that this common belief has been a powerful deterrent from evil living at some times and within certain limited areas. It operated thus in Europe during the Middle Ages, and it does so in the territory of Islam to-day. But all will agree that the righteousness thus evoked has been and is of a very unsatisfactory quality.

“The fear o’ hell’s a hangman’s whip
To haud the wretch in order.”

It has never succeeded in being more than that. Reward and penalty have been exploited to the utmost for moral purposes. The joys of heaven have been painted in forms most attractive and colors most ravishing, the picture of hell with its lurid torments has been drawn by the hands of the world’s most transcendent geniuses. But the result has always been amazingly meagre in its effect upon men’s conduct. While it has fired a few with an ecstatic longing and overwhelmed a few in a deadly terror, the great multitude, even while they assent to the truth of the doctrine, live as though it were

non-existent. In our own time it may well be doubted whether its effect upon conduct is even appreciable. Forty years ago Frederick W. Robertson noted that "future retribution has become a kind of figment. Hell is in the world of shadows. The tone in which educated men speak of it still is often only that of good-humored condescension which makes allowances for childish superstition." It is generally allowed even by the most orthodox that the exploitation of a "material" heaven and a "material" hell has been a mistake. But what they do not appear to notice is the fact that when the "material" element is eliminated from the idea nothing is left of it. If it is not material, it is nothing. Its practical effect, where it has had any, has been due to the way in which it has either allured or frightened the imagination. But to do this it must be presented in forms which the imagination can present before itself. If its form be left out its substance vanishes. The attempt to substitute purely spiritual pleasures and spiritual agonies for the crude glories of heaven and the crude horrors of hell must always remain unsuccessful. In point of fact, the whole presentation of future reward and penalty has ceased to move. The awards and

the sentences are felt to be irrelevant. The whole scheme is mechanical and artificial. It rests upon presumptions which are so essentially unreasonable and inequitable that advance in intelligence and moral sincerity renders them intolerable. The classification of "righteous" and "wicked" is the merest figment. No objective fact corresponds to it. If it be assumed that all men without regard to their stage of moral development pass on into another life, which is endless by its very nature, the sense of fair dealing demands that each should be left unclassified and undoomed until the end of his line of moral movement. This is indeed the explicit teaching of Christ, concerning those who are capable of passing on at all. The wheat and the tares grow together until the end of the æon, and then the wheat is gathered into the garner, and the tares are thrown into the fire to be destroyed. But this natural process of life, growth, and development, culminating finally in stable being or in disintegration, has nothing in common with the scheme of probation, trial, judgment, acquittal, and sentence which has lost what power it ever possessed to influence life. It is the plain fact that whenever the belief becomes current that a future life of some sort is assured for all in

any event, men will conclude to wait until that life is reached before beginning any very strenuous effort to determine its character.

If, on the other hand, we follow the teaching of Christ and of nature, we find a moral dynamic which is quite incalculable, and from which there is no escape. Compared with its dire discovery of disaster following in the path of moral offence, the threat of hell is but as the rattling of a medicine man's gourd. Let a man once see that the alternative which confronts him at every step of his moral progression is life or death, that his task is, as Christ says, "to win for himself a soul," or, at a farther stage, it is "to save his soul alive," and he will realize that he is face to face with realities and not with an extraneous arrangement arbitrarily established. The appeal is to that deepest, strongest, most persistent of all desires, the love of life. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." It need hardly be repeated that he cannot die unless he have first become alive. But when once moral consciousness has been reached by the individual, its instinct of self-preservation may confidently be depended upon to induce strenuous action to protect itself from death, unless it be misled by some outside assurance that

death is not for it a possible issue. It may well be that suicide is possible for a human being at every stage of its history, here or yonder. Indeed, it is not easy to conceive the possibility of a conscious personality being kept alive against its own determination to make an end of itself. Such a condition of existence would seem to contradict the very idea of personality. It is possible that God may be no more able to force a man to live than to force him to love. There are places where coercion defeats itself. Certainly it is true now that every man holds in his hand the power to slay himself if he so wills. One wonders sometimes why the power is not more frequently used. Hamlet was mistaken in his explanation, — 'tis not "the dread of something after death, which makes us rather bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of." 'Tis not because "resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The resolve upon self-destruction is reached even more reluctantly by the brutal savage who has no thought of anything lying beyond than it is by the educated man whose imagination is crowded with pictures of post-obituary horrors. The elemental instinct of living may be trusted to keep one from making his own

quietus wherever he may be. The horror of ceasing to be is a far more powerful emotion than the fear of damnation. If fear be needed at all, or be efficacious at all to the evocation of goodness, here is a form of disaster having a potency compared with which the threat of hell is but a bogie to frighten children. Let one think as lightly as he pleases of the joys of heaven or the pains of hell, "the law hath yet another hold upon him." The law is that same inexorable one which operates throughout the whole kingdom of living things. The continuance of any individual in being is dependent upon his conforming to the requirements of life at the stage where he is. St. Paul has set out in the most accurate statement what are the laws for the kind of beings which most of us have come to be. When one has reached to that point of moral progress which he describes by the phrase "being in Christ Jesus," he has passed out from under the inferior law binding upon creatures who have not reached so far. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life. The mind of the flesh is not subject to this higher law of God, indeed it

cannot be. But ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, provided that the spirit of God inhabiteth you. If the Christ is in you the body is indeed dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. *If* the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead be in you, he that raiseth up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through the spirit that dwelleth in you. So then, brethren, we are under obligation not to the flesh to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh ye are bound to die, but if by the spirit ye mortify the action of the body ye shall live."

This is the key to the marvellous welcome with which the world hailed the "good news of the Gospel of Resurrection"; to the languid indifference with which the gospel of deliverance from hell is received to-day; to the new enthusiasm for righteousness which might be expected to burst out once more if men were brought to see that holiness is the very path to abiding life.



The Influence of Christ in Modern Life

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FROM THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

By way of preëminence this era now closing has been an era of criticism and destruction. Nothing has escaped the crucible. Scholars have carried the method of the laboratory into the library, the gallery, the legislative hall, and even into the temples of religion. Old poems, old histories, old science, old creeds, have been pulled to pieces, and studied part by part. With some the analytic spirit has become a frenzy, and the love of dissection a morbid passion. With others analysis has represented a desire to know the exact facts. Now that the wave of criticism has passed by, changes many and great are found to have taken place. Nothing remains as it was. We have a new chemistry, a new pedagogy, a new psychology. And now that the intellect has completed its analytic work, our generation has come to realize that the heart with its hunger is, as before, unappeased. Religion is the life of God in the soul of man. The creed is the outer, verbal photograph of that inner, vital experience. Man's interest in those verbal pictures named creeds, unfortunately, seems waning, while his interest in religion is steadily waxing. As Edmund Burke once said, "Man is by constitution a religious animal."

Now that the destructive era has closed, from the view-point of the new scholarship many are beginning to feel that the critical epoch was, after all, an epoch of mediocrity and second rate intellect. All the great eras in art and literature have been creative eras rather than critical. . . . In his preparatory work the youth enters the laboratory to study the human body, counting its bones and studying the chemical elements of nerves and muscles. Later, when the young Romeo meets Juliet, he is lifted into a new realm by the new friendship, and never thinks of reducing the beautiful girl to a group of small jars marked "lime," "phosphate," and "carbon." And there are the best of reasons for believing that in religion the critical epoch has gone and the creative era has come.

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